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VOLUME LXVI, NUMBER 19941

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 1998 • SIVAN 4, 5758 • 3 SAFAR 1419

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Zone residents suspected in 2 IDF soldiers' deaths

By DAVID RUDGE

Widespread searches were instigated in the security zone yesterday to try and catch those involved in a bomb attack near the border fence late Wednesday night in which two Golan Brigade soldiers were killed and two others lightly wounded.

Security sources said it appeared that some residents of the zone had collaborated with the Hizbullah gunmen who planted and detonated the bomb alongside the troops. Hizbullah claimed responsibility for the attack, and vowed yesterday to keep up the pressure on Israel.

"We launched operations that killed Zionist soldiers and their agents because Lebanese civilians were attacked," a Hizbullah official told Reuters. "We will keep attacking the Zionist enemy and their agents as long as Lebanon is occupied."

During the searches yesterday, another explosive device was discovered and safely disarmed. St-Sgt. Yehuda Salem, 20, from Beit Shemesh and Staff Sgt. Avraham Limor, 20, of Jerusalem, were killed in the explosion. Salem was laid to rest at the military cemetery of his home town yesterday afternoon. The funeral of Limor was held later at Mt. Herzl in Jerusalem.

Their deaths brought to six the number of IDF soldiers killed in south Lebanon since the beginning of the year, while more than 50 have been wounded, some seriously.

The fatal bomb attack occurred around 11 on Wednesday night, shortly after the soldiers left their position on the border for what was described as a routine night mission.

They had not walked far when the bomb, a Claymore anti-personnel mine filled with metal balls, was detonated as the soldiers passed. The fact that they adhered to regulations and kept a distance from one another prevented more deaths.

The explosion occurred within 50 meters of the border fence, across from Kibbutz Misgav Am, but on the Lebanese side.

"We were walking and suddenly there was a big explosion. It took a few moments [to recover]," said Corp. Yaniv Nizri, who was lightly wounded in the attack.

Nizri, speaking to reporters at Safed's Rebecca Sieff Hospital where he and the other wounded soldier are being treated, said he was knocked to the ground by the force of the blast, but did not realize at first that he had been hurt.

See ZONE, Page 15



The parents of St-Sgt. Yehuda Salem, who was killed in Lebanon on Wednesday, mourn yesterday as he is buried in the military section of the Beit Shemesh Cemetery. Stories, Page 2.

(Brian Hendler)

Pakistan detonates 5 nuclear devices

Clinton pledges sanctions

News agencies

Just hours after Pakistan detonated five nuclear devices, President Rafik Tarar declared a state of emergency yesterday, citing threats of "external aggression."

The terse announcement, carried by the state-run news agency, did not identify who the aggressor might be, but Pakistan has accused neighboring India of threatening to attack its nuclear installations.

In reaction, US President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin agreed to "stay in close touch" in light of the nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, the White House said yesterday.

In a telephone call meant as an update on Russian economic reforms, the two leaders discussed "the seriousness of the situation" with Pakistan's nuclear tests and concerns about a nuclear arms race on the Asian subcontinent, said White House spokesman Mike McCurry.

"They agreed they need to stay in close touch and work together to defuse tensions in South Asia," McCurry said.

Earlier, Clinton condemned Pakistan's decision as a lost opportunity, and said: "We have no choice but to impose sanctions."

"Two wrongs don't make a right," said Clinton.

See PAKISTAN, Page 18

US said to expect 15% pullout

By JAY BUSHNISKY

Word is spreading at the senior government level that the State Department expects the cabinet to decide at its next meeting on Monday, or by the end of next week, that the IDF will withdraw from up to 15 percent of the West Bank.

A source coupled this demand yesterday to a warning from the US that Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will publish the proposals made by American intermediaries, a move that one diplomat said would transform the current differences between Israel and the US into "an open confrontation."

The source said the cabinet's acceptance of a pullback deemed adequate by the US administration would be followed by President Bill Clinton convening a summit conference in Washington within the next two weeks or by the end of June with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat.

"I have absolutely no first-hand knowledge of any such deadline,

except as speculated in the press," said David Bar-Ilan, the prime minister's director of communications. "I don't think it is wise to set deadlines or ultimatums. We're dealing here with questions of Israel's security and not with trivial matters," Bar-Ilan said.

New support for an IDF withdrawal from more than the 9 percent minimum set by the cabinet earlier this year came yesterday from Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani.

See PULLOUT, Page 18

Walker: US won't pressure Israel

By AVINOAM BAR-YOSEF

The US administration will not pressure Israel, nor will it initiate any sanctions against it, US Ambassador to Israel Ned Walker reportedly said on Wednesday, to a group of academics and peace activists.

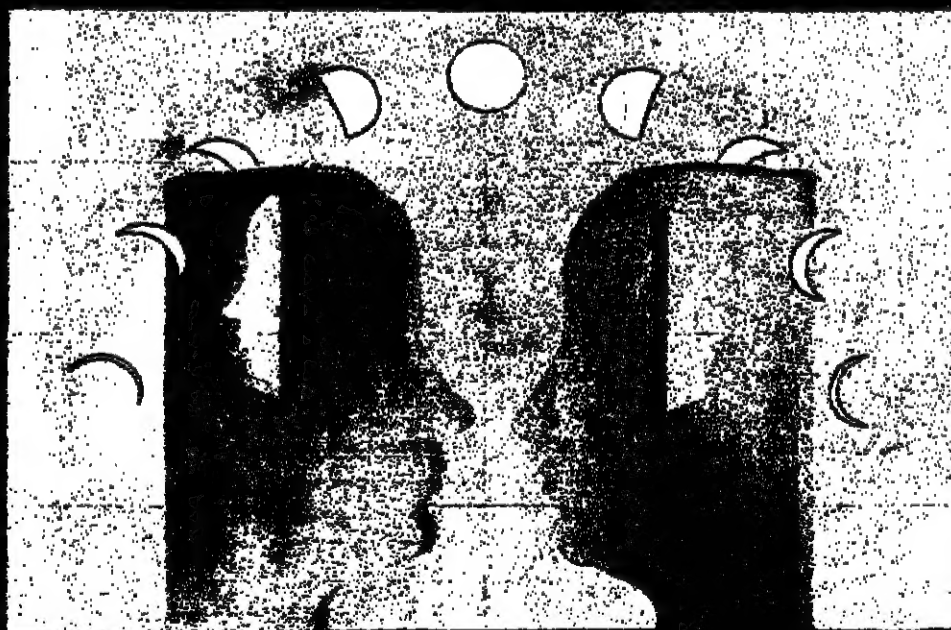
According to several participants, Walker said that the real lobby on Israel's behalf is the entire American people, and that in this respect the influence of America's Jewish community is not definitive.

The definitive factor, he said, is the support of the American people for the people of Israel.

The remarks were made in response to demands by Labor Party activist Tzali Reshef that the US exert economic pressure on Israel in light of the government's stubborn stand in the diplomatic process.

See PRESSURE, Page 16

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St.-Sgt. Yehuda Salem, a lifetime volunteer

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

St.-Sgt. Yehuda Salem, the combat medic for his Golan company, prepared for his role of saving his comrades' lives in Lebanon ever since he was 14 and volunteered for Magen David Adom in his hometown of Beit Shemesh.

Salem, 20, was buried yesterday after he and St.-Sgt. Avraham Limoi were killed and two other soldiers wounded Wednesday night by a roadside bomb in Lebanon.

"He never liked to tell us when he was serving in Lebanon so we wouldn't worry," said his brother Nissim. "My right hand has been cut off," grieved Nissim. "We were three brothers very



Yehuda Salem
(Reproduction by Brian Hendler)

close in age. We are together. We played together. We all learned in the same school. If I needed help it was Yehuda or Liran. When he needed help it was me or Liran. We always tried to help each

other. My right hand is gone."

Yehuda's father, Victor, who is unemployed and suffers from a chronic illness, was a man of few words in his grief. "It's my end. The end. He won't be sorry for what he did. He will get from God his due," he said.

Salem's brother also serves in Golan and is presently in basic training. Salem's friends gathered at his home described him as a modest young man who was always helping. They said he was proud to be a medic and set an example to others at his school when he volunteered at Magen David Adom.

He graduated from Amit Furst religious high school, which lost seven girl pupils in the Naharayim massacre last

year. Spreading out among the pine slopes of the Judean foothills, Beit Shemesh is a city of 31,400 residents where many people know each other. Salem was the 65th soldier from Beit Shemesh to fall in the line of duty.

"Beit Shemesh has the feeling of a small town, even though it has doubled itself in the past year and is set to double itself again," said Ketzi Shetreet, chief security officer of the town.

"Yehuda Salem was not a rowdy kid. He was an excellent student who wanted to continue his studies. He was dedicated and interested in everything he did," Shetreet said.

Limoi's parents didn't know he was in Lebanon

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH and Hani

Rubama and Zion Limoi were unaware that their son, St.-Sgt. Avraham Limoi, was serving in Lebanon until they were notified by the authorities of his death early yesterday morning.

Limoi had told his sister, Shulamit, that he had left a training course because he wanted to see combat in Lebanon before finishing his army service.

Described by his family, friends, and comrades in arms as a gentle, loving person, Limoi telephoned home on Wednesday night.

"He had just finished a course and called home and spoke with my father,"

Shulamit said. "He asked where everyone was and when my father said no one else was home, he told him to send his love to the family and that all was well and not to worry if he didn't come home for Shabbat or Shavuot."

Throughout the day friends and fellow soldiers from his Golan unit poured into the apartment in Jerusalem's Ma'alot Dafna neighborhood to express their condolences and comfort the family.

Groups of Bnei Akiva counselors gathered at the apartment building entrance stared in disbelief at the obituary notices bearing his name.

Limoi, a graduate of the capital's Himmelfarb High School, was active in the Bnei



Avraham Limoi
(Reproduction by Brian Hendler)

Akiva youth movement, where he was a counselor. He loved sports, particularly rappelling and hiking in the desert. His fondest love, said his sister, was riding dune buggies in places inaccessible

by foot.

It was clear from the outset that her brother would apply for a combat unit, she said, adding that he would not settle for less. "He wanted to be a fighter at any price and take part in combat operations. He did what he wanted most, but this time he didn't return," she said.

Hundreds accompanied Limoi as he was laid to rest last night at the Mt. Herzl Military Cemetery. He is survived by his parents, four sisters, and a brother.

Earlier Shulamit Limoi told reporters: "We are not angry at anyone. He served his country and died for it. I hope that there will be no more families that will know such sorrow."

PLC session breaks up over budget row

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH and MOHAMMED NAJIB

Palestinian legislators meeting in Ramallah yesterday expressed their dismay at the Palestinian Authority for not presenting its budget for 1998.

Amid angry shouts during the meeting, Speaker Ahmed Qurei (Abu Ala) halted the session and walked out.

Qurei said he wanted to give the PA another two weeks to prepare the budget in line with a request by Finance Minister Mohammed Natshebi.

PLC members said they will hold an emergency session tomorrow to discuss the situation and are considering holding a no confidence vote against the PA.

They said they would also discuss Qurei's decision to cut the session short.

The PLC member from the Bethlehem region, Salah Ta'ari, charged that "Abu Ala is killing the PLC council." Ta'ari hinted that the PLC Presidency was conspiring with the Executive Authority.

PA Chairman Yasser Arafat's spokesman, Marwan Kanfani, said: "Abu Ala has no right to end the session in such a way."

No comment was available from Qurei after the meeting.

Defense officials mull barring Yassin's return

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN and LIAT COLLINS

Senior defense officials and IDF commanders met yesterday to discuss whether or not Israel would allow Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin to return to

the Gaza Strip following his fundraising trip abroad.

The matter was discussed yesterday at the "Settlements Forum," a weekly assessment meeting held at Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai's office. Senior IDF officers, the head of the General Security Service, and Police Inspector-General Yehuda Wilk participated.



Members of the Four Mothers group protest opposite the Defense Ministry. (Dan Oren/overland.com)

Four Mothers holds 'mourning vigils'

By DAVID RUDGE

Members of the Four Mothers movement, which is calling for the withdrawal of the IDF from south Lebanon staged "mourning vigils" throughout the country yesterday, following the deaths of two soldiers in a bomb attack near the border fence late Wednesday night.

A bigger demonstration was held outside the Defense Ministry's offices in Tel Aviv. The participants lit memorial candles and carried placards, urging the government to "find a solution to the Lebanon problem."

Movement chairperson and founder Rachel Ben-Dor said more activities were planned in the coming week, culminating in a mass demonstration outside the Tel Aviv Museum next Saturday night, June 6, to mark the 16th of the start of the Lebanon War.

"Nearly 16 years after the beginning of the Lebanon War and our sons are continuing to come home in coffins," Ben-Dor said yesterday, after expressing condolences to the families of the soldiers killed in the Hizbullah bomb attack.

"It seems as if nobody cares, because if they really did and

mean it, then they would do something," said Ben-Dor.

She also called on more members of the public to join the movement and the quiet vigils, instead of "crying in front of the television at home or over the phone."

Ben-Dor said they hoped to meet with Shas spiritual leader Rabbi Ovadia Yosef next week, following a recent meeting with members of the party's Knesset faction.

"We also intend to distribute leaflets to Lebanese workers at the border which we have translated into Arabic and which give details of the casualties on both sides of the border, in an effort to win their support to put an end to the blood-letting."

Winning numbers

In yesterday's weekly Payis Hazak drawing, ticket number 165067 won NIS 1.5 million, while ticket number 491333 won the car.

Tickets 204449, 784699, 745385, 465456, 8900, 65,239,247 and 246831 won NIS 5,000. Tickets ending in 88157, 22875, 76022, 64756, 16081, 1134, 43403, 01386, 64388, 94321, 5169, 404206, 83930, 24322, 51520, 54066, 00205, 20622 and 06779 won NIS 1,000. Tickets ending in 643,471, 447 and 521 won NIS 100. Tickets ending in 53,20,13 and 47 won NIS 30. Tickets ending in 33 and 08 won NIS 20. Tickets ending in 6 and 1 won 5 NIS.

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9 a.m.-8 p.m., Mintz Auditorium (History Dept.)

Democracies and Their Armed Forces Towards the 21st Century: Israel in Comparative Context

international conference (English) on Monday-Wednesday, June 8-10, 1998
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NEWSLINE

with Prof. Gerald Steinberg, a senior researcher at
BESA Center for Strategic Studies, Bar-Ilan University

Now that Pakistan has met India's nuclear tests with its own, do the detonations actually stabilize the situation?

No. We don't know what will happen. This is an unprecedented situation. We never had two countries in a conflict situation which have both conducted tests so close [in time] to each other. Pakistan said it had nuclear weapons to use in case it had to respond to an Indian attack and now they proved it. There is a certain amount of tension created now. The Pakistanis are worried about a strike from India and the Indians are nervous of a Pakistani attack. The whole situation is unstable.

But now that they both have the bomb, don't they join the rest of the nuclear club by behaving with mutual deterrence? There already had been a sense of mutual deterrence at a lower level. This is going to be a problem for a number of years. Any kind of suspicious movement on one side's radar for example could potentially escalate the situation.

Pakistan tested the bombs despite heavy US pressure. Why? They felt that all of the American pressure and aid packages wasn't going to provide them with the security they needed. They saw that India was leaving Pakistan way behind by doing its tests.

India's bombs were more powerful and sophisticated? A bomb is a bomb. India is vulnerable to the Pakistani threats.

Is this the Islamic bomb? I don't see this as the Islamic bomb that was going to become available to Iran or to Libya or Saudi Arabia. Pakistan clearly did this in the context of South Asia. Their relations with Iran are weak and they have an interest in not spreading this into the Middle East. We certainly have to monitor Pakistan's capability to transfer technology. But if the Chinese helped Pakistan to make the atomic bomb, then they can also help Iran and other states just like the Russians are doing.

What does this mean to the Non-Proliferation Treaty?

This is a major blow to the NPT. Some will even say it is the end of the NPT. I say it's a major challenge. Israel has been upset by the lack of strong American leadership regarding Iran and its quest for nuclear capability. For a year-and-a-half, the Americans have not responded as strong as they have toward India and Pakistan. The NPT is now seen as having big cracks. The Americans are going to have to struggle very hard to prevent things from getting worse. They can say South Asia is lost and now not allow transfer of technology from there elsewhere.

Should Israelis be worried now?

The addition of Pakistan [to the nuclear club] is not something that changes our threat environment. Not for the short range at least. They [the tests] were totally directed toward India.

Arieh O'Sullivan

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GUIDE: Israel Ne'eman. NIS 225.

THURSDAY, JUNE 18. IF I WAS A RICH MAN...
Baron Edmund de Rothschild helped the first aliyah with great generosity. We'll see some of the benefits when we visit beautiful ZICHRON YAAKOV, overlooking the Mediterranean, BAT SHLOMO, the MIKVE YISRAEL agricultural school, and the MEZGAQA MUSEUM center for archeological research.
GUIDE: Avi Ben Hur. NIS 225

SUNDAY, JUNE 21. THE BIBLE SITES BEFORE YOUR EYES
Tour guide and Bible scholar Aris Salomon leads you to the sites while you read from the sources. HAR GILGO, JUDAH & TAMAR, DAVID & GOLIATH in the Valley of Elai, the LACHISH letters, and fire signals from AZEKHA, the MIDRAS caves. Everything comes into focus in this not-to-be-missed tour.
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SUNDAY, JULY 5. ANCIENT SYNAGOGUES OF THE GALILEE
After Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 CE and following the Bar Kochba rebellion, the Jews fled to the Galilee where their life began to flourish. We'll begin to understand what really happened when we visit HATBAT TIBERIAS, CORAZIM and CAPERNAUM.
GUIDE: Eliot Chodof. NIS 230.

SUNDAY, JULY 26. ACRE - THE CRUSADER CITY
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Shavuot spirit
Gal, who attends a WIZO nursery in Tel Aviv, munches on a nectarine during a pre-Shavuot activity with his class yesterday. Shavuot, the one-day festival celebrating the receipt of the Torah at Mt. Sinai, starts tomorrow night. (Yael Somekh/Israel Sam)

Court blocks 'Mabat' editor's suspension

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN

The Jerusalem Labor Court yesterday issued an injunction halting the suspension of Nathan Guttman, one of the two *Mabat* editors whom Israel Broadcasting Authority Director-General Uri Porat suspended for allegedly doctored a news report. The injunction was issued at the request of the Israel Television workers' union.

Porat suspended Guttman and his deputy, Elisha Spiegelman, earlier this week after concluding they had edited a news story of Betar Jerusalem football supporters to misrepresent Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu acknowledging their chants of "Death to the Arabs."

Porat yesterday instructed Channel 1 news head Rafik Halabi

to suspend Guttman and Spiegelman from all their news editing duties as of yesterday morning. The union intends to obtain another injunction to prevent Spiegelman's suspension.

Channel 1 staffers yesterday charged Porat with using his post to settle Netanyahu's account with *Mabat* for its coverage of the Bar-On Affair.

"We're back to the days of darkness and fear," one worker said, pointing to hidden cameras the workers found in the editing rooms as one example.

Some workers said they fear Porat's intention is to turn the public broadcasting channel into the prime minister's mouthpiece or to shut it down, in revenge for exposing irregularities, corruption, and improper conduct in government.

Radio and television representatives told an emergency meeting of the National Federation of Israeli Journalists executive yesterday about working in an atmosphere of threats and fear for the past five weeks, since Porat's appointment. They said Porat summons journalists to hearings, interferes with their work, and bullies them. The federation denounced "the campaign of intimidation and slander conducted in the past weeks against IBA journalists" and pledged to fight for the public channel's independence and freedom of expression.

The federation decided to take legal measures to prevent the suspensions and rejected Porat's conclusions regarding the Betar tape. It demanded setting up a professional, independent committee

headed by a public figure to examine the report's editing, and insisted Porat freeze all disciplinary measures until the examination is completed. Porat also reprimanded television director Yair Stern and news chief Halabi.

"Porat, who is a political appointee, cannot be the one to decide whether the cassette was doctored or edited in a biased way. Only a neutral body can do that," federation secretary Razi Guterman said.

Likud MK Ruby Rivlin yesterday submitted a motion to the agenda for a Knesset debate on what he called *Mabat* staffers' manipulative editing. He accused Halabi of being "a considerable manipulator who has been denounced in the past for distorting and presenting half truths in a television story of June 1979."

Barak slams 'silence of the cabinet lambs'

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN

Labor Party leader MK Ehud Barak yesterday accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of leading the nation to war and bloodshed.

"We are heading for disaster and the lambs in the cabinet are silent. When catastrophe strikes, and it will, no one will be able to say he didn't see the writing on the wall," Barak told a press conference summing up Netanyahu's two years in office. MKs Haim Ramon and Uzi Baram accompanied him.

Barak predicted a violent confrontation in the region that will result in heavy casualties, caused by the stalemate in the peace process and Netanyahu's putting his political survival above the talks with the Palestinians.

"He who is leading to unnecessary war and bloodshed, which will give us no advantage at all, is weakening Israel's resistance and security," Barak said. "The victims of tomorrow or next week or next year are still going to the

movies, will take a trip during the holiday... they still don't know. The mothers of the next victims and their orphans don't know yet," Barak said.

He stressed that although Israel would triumph in the military confrontation, its leaders will have difficulty explaining the unnecessary loss of life, when they could have chosen the alternative of reaching peace.

"I am not speaking as opposition chairman, but as a former IDF chief of staff, as a worried father, as a citizen of the state," he added.

He urged Netanyahu to stop traveling round the world and go to Washington to settle the interim agreement.

"The government is strangling the peace with false arguments and ruining confidence, while the lambs in the security cabinet keep silent," Barak said. Among the "silent lambs" he listed Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, and Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani.

Addressing these ministers, Barak said, "You can't say your hands are clean. You're all patriots and have taken part in this country's wars and construction. You cannot keep silent any longer."

Barak came out strongly against a national unity government, stating, "We have no confidence in this government's path and we will not be part of a so-called unity government which leads us to disaster."

Ramon called on these ministers to say in public what they have been saying in closed rooms about Netanyahu's leadership and functioning. "The ministers let Netanyahu continue acting, even though they see what a disaster he's leading us into," he said.

Barak said it should be stated clearly that Israel will agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state in the territories it occupies. He also warned that the Prime Minister's Office is threatening the public broadcasting authority, with the intention of "mobilizing television for government propaganda."

Labor in uproar over canceling primaries

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN

A storm erupted in Labor's leadership yesterday following a meeting between party leader Ehud Barak and a group of activists known to be leading the initiative to cancel the primary elections.

Senior Labor figures came out sharply against canceling the primaries, warning it would destroy the party and urged Barak to take a firm, clear stand against the move.

Barak yesterday declared he was against scrapping the primaries and was not about to change his mind. "The issue is not on the agenda," he said.

Commenting on the meeting he held Wednesday night with the activists, Barak said his door was open to any group of party members who wanted to see him, regardless of their positions.

He did not refer to the reports that his political adviser, Ronni Bondi, was one of the leading activists seeking to cancel the primaries.

Many Labor members and MKs fear Barak may wish to follow in the footsteps of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who abolished primaries in the Likud so that ministers and MKs would stop criticizing him.

In the absence of primaries, the party's central committee elects its Knesset list. Fearing they might not be re-elected, MKs and ministers alike curry favor with the committee members and refrain from criticism of the party leadership.

MK Haim Ramon said the bid to cancel the primaries was a destructive initiative which must be nipped in the bud.

"It will drag Labor back to the

dark days of the rule of the apparatus and the functionaries," Ramon said. "It will strike a crippling blow to the party, which should be concentrating its efforts to topple Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's bad government and get Barak elected prime minister."

MK Hagai Merom said: "Those who want to abolish primaries want to shut MKs up and stop them from voicing their opinions. They see how the independent ministers and MKs in the Likud became silent and want the same for Labor."

Merom said if the primaries are abolished, tens of thousands of party members will leave it, being deprived of their power to elect their representatives.

MK Uzi Baram warned that abolishing the primaries would split the party.

Greens end 30-hour protest in Haifa

By DAVID RUDGE

Environmental activists yesterday ended their 30-hour-long demonstration during which they were chained to a crane nearly 80 meters above Haifa's Hof Hacarmel Beach, following the intervention of Meretz MK Ran Cohen.

The two women had been there since the early hours of Wednesday morning as part of a protest organized by three organizations, Green Action, Green Course, and Anonymous.

The activists were protesting against what they described as the destruction of Israel's coastline by development.

Cohen arrived in the morning at the Hof Hacarmel site, where a new hotel and holiday apartment

complex is being constructed, and climbed up the crane to speak with the demonstrators, persuading them to end their protest.

The demonstrators left the site without police or the building contractors taking any action against them, even though their demonstration had stopped the crane's work.

The Carmel Beach Resort company strenuously denied that the development work was adversely affecting the beaches. The construction is in accordance with the

law and approved plans and the project took into account ecological requirements, the company said.

Furthermore, the company noted that the project would help boost Haifa's economic and tourist development, for the benefit of all the city's residents.

Cohen told the green activists he would raise the issue in the Knesset and pledged to try to establish a national authority for the preservation of Israel's coastline.

MKs decry bill to remove Arabic as second language

By LIAT COLLINS

The bill submitted this week by MK Michael Kleiner (Geshet) which would abolish Arabic as the country's second official language continued to generate angry responses yesterday.

Tourism Minister Moshe Katzav, who is also responsible for Arab affairs, announced that when the bill is presented to the ministerial committee for legislation, he will oppose it.

"If someone is scared for the status of the Jewish population because of the existing recognition of the Arabic language, it is a sign of his own low self-confidence and Kleiner would do better to withdraw his bill," Katzav said.

Geshet leader David Levy completely dissociated himself from the private member's bill submitted by Kleiner and said the party favors full and equal rights for the Arab population.

President Ezer Weizman spoke against the bill during a condolence visit in the North yesterday. "It is a serious mistake when Israel has a population of 1 million Arabs, native-born Israelis," Weizman said. "This is utmost stupidity."

Kleiner's reasoning for the bill is that "in the present time, following the Oslo Agreement and giving autonomy to the Arabs, there is no more need to recognize Arabic as an official language in Israel."

He said Hebrew should be the only official language although the government could draw up regulations for using other languages where it is deemed necessary. He also said he favors teaching Arabic as a foreign language in schools, but said there is no reason for it to retain the official status it had under the British Mandate.

"It can't be that on the one hand there is an entity called autonomy

for Israeli Arabs [the Palestinian autonomous areas] while the State of Israel itself will be binational. The minute you go towards a division between Jews and Arabs, it's clear that the Jewish state, Israel, should be 100 percent Jewish with Hebrew as its language and with Jewish symbols.

"Of course, any Arab who wants to be faithful to it can be a faithful citizen with equal rights," Kleiner said.

Knesset Interior Committee Chairman Salah Tarif (Labor) described the bill as "foolish,

wicked and racist."

"Such a bill would not make the Arabs more Israeli but make them feel more removed," Tarif said.

Meanwhile Kleiner asked the head of the Knesset Ethics Committee, Yehuda Lankry (Geshet), to examine whether Azmi Bishara can be allowed to continue to serve in the Knesset following a newspaper interview in which the Hadash MK is quoted as saying he "preferred to forget" the oath of allegiance to the State of Israel and its laws he made when he entered the Knesset.



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■ Iraqi Jews in Israel: Dr. B. Levy, Dr. E. Meir, Dr. T. Lasker-Davish, Dr. N. Gal, Mrs. N. Qasab.
■ Iraqi Jewish Families and their Names: Dr. Z. Yehuda, Prof. Y. Avishur, Mr. G. Shamshon.
■ The Absorption and Integration of Iraqi Jews in Israel: Mr. S. Hillel, Dr. D. Hacohen, Prof. S. Smooha, Mr. Y. Meir, Mr. M. Ben-Porat, Mr. D. Post.

Wednesday, June 17, 1998

■ The Iraqi Jewish Community and its Institutions in Modern Times (A): Prof. G. Golany, Dr. A. Ben-Yacov, Prof. A. Uziel, Dr. M. Gut.
■ Iraqi Jews in the Far East: Prof. J. Ronald, Dr. C. Bein, Prof. B. Weinstein, Dr. M. Samra.
■ The Iraqi Jewish Community and its Institutions in Modern Times (B): Mr. O. Ben-Oziz, Dr. R. Simon, Dr. D. Tishbani, Dr. N. Kozlov, Mr. D. Segiv.
■ Jews and Medicine in Iraq and Israel (in conjunction with the Center for Jewish Medical Heritage): Prof. Y. Samra, Prof. S. Kozak, Prof. Y. Haddad, Prof. U. Seligson, Dr. D. Harnaz.
■ The Jews of Kurdistan: Y. Zakka, Dr. S. Sabar, Mr. Y. Yekov.

Thursday, June 18, 1998

■ Iraqi Jews in the Far East, the U.S. and Australia: Mr. M. Zilka, Mr. Y. Karem, Mr. P. Goumy, Mr. M. Shohet, Dr. M. Samra.
■ Folklore, Ethnography and Culture: Judge (Ret.) E. Nawi, Prof. D. Noy, Prof. S. Moroh, Dr. B. Yaniv, Dr. O. Goldberg.
■ Iraqi Jews and Oriental Jewish Communities: Mrs. S. Arbeli-Almouzni, Dr. Y. Ben-Ami, Dr. Y. Harel, Dr. S. Sahayik.
■ Iraqi Jewish Literature: Prof. J. Mazon, Prof. Y. Tobl, Prof. T. Boeri, Dr. L. Dabby-Jour.
■ Symposium - Iraqi Jewish Literature: Prof. S. Moroh, Prof. S. Somekh, Dr. L. Dabby-Jour, Mr. E. Amir.
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Dig at disputed Old City site begins Monday

By ELLI WOHLGELER

The Antiquities Authority is to begin an exploratory excavation at a site owned by the Ateret Cohanim Yeshiva inside Jerusalem's Old City on Monday. It has not yet been decided whether the Ateret Cohanim students will take part in the dig, but they will be able to maintain a presence on the plot, which is just inside Herod's Gate opposite the Rockefeller Museum.

The authority will conduct a month-long dig, after which it will determine whether a more extensive excavation is needed.

"It is one of the corners that have not been excavated in the Old City, and so the Antiquities Authority will excavate in order to determine how deep to dig to find the different layers," said spokeswoman Osnat Gaoz.

Gaoz said the area may contain artifacts from the Byzantine era, or even the period of the Second Temple.

If nothing of value is found, Ateret Cohanim will then apply to the city for a building permit, for the construction of a yeshiva named in memory of Haim Kerman, who was fatally knifed

on May 6.

Matt Dan, director of Ateret Cohanim, said that Antiquities Authority director Amir Drori told him that a vibrant Jewish community had lived in the area up until the period of the First Crusades, when it was wiped out.

"This area is drenched with the blood of Jews," Dan said. "It will definitely be very exciting to uncover the findings here, and to tie the people of Israel to another Jewish area in the Old City of Jerusalem."

This will help erase the idea that Jerusalem is divided into quarters, and will contribute to the unity of Jerusalem. We plan to bring many groups to visit, and to erect on this site the campus of Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim."

The aluminum shacks set up on Tuesday were taken down overnight Wednesday, after a compromise agreement was worked out among Ateret Cohanim, the Antiquities Authority, and the city.

included members of the Palestinian Legislative Council. The PLC announced that their presence there was an official meeting of the parliament, the first such meeting ever in Jerusalem.

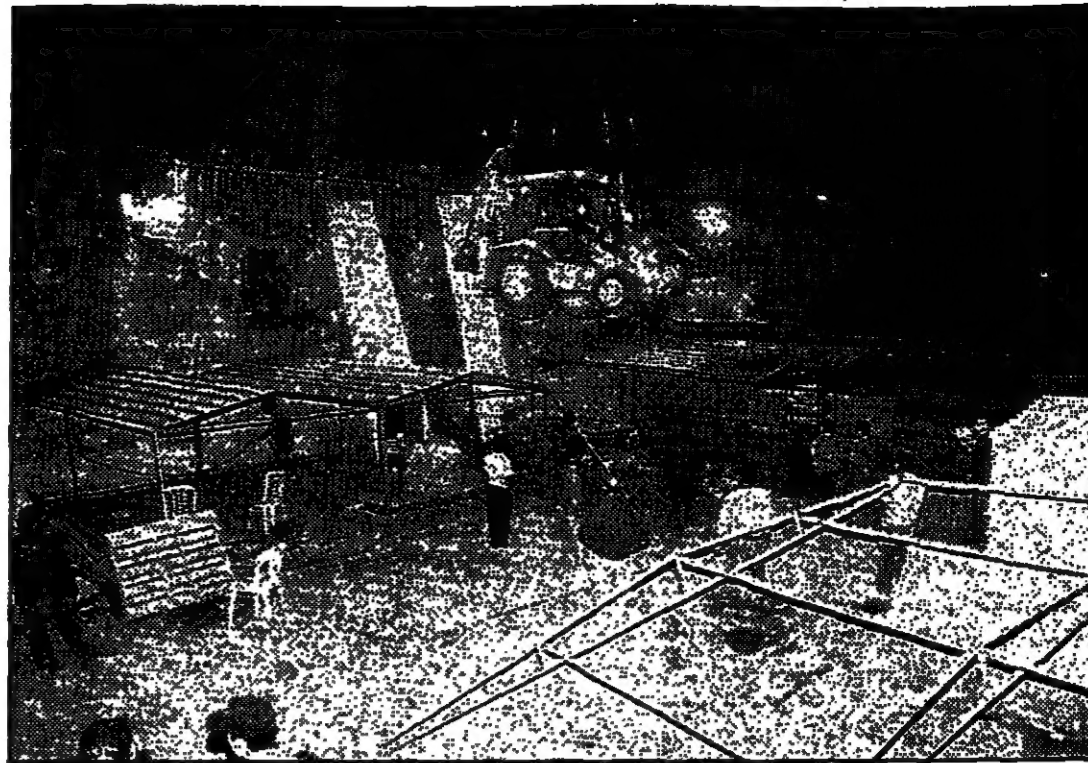
Margot Dudkevitch and Mohammed Najib add:

Palestinian officials expressed anger over the forthcoming dig. PLC member Khaleel Abdel Khader said on Israel Radio yesterday that the Palestinians are outraged over the agreement and demanded the settlers leave the site.

"If the settlers return we will return and there will be violence," he warned. PA Minister of Jerusalem Affairs Faisal Husseini said, "We refuse to recognize any deal that allows the settlers to remain at the site," and added that the land belongs to the Islamic Wakf.

PLC Speaker Ahmed Qurei condemned the agreement, saying it is a mockery and would only serve to increase violence in Jerusalem instead of calming the situation.

"The agreement is basically void, because it was made between sides who have no links to the place."



A crane lowers a mini-bulldozer onto the Ateret Cohanim site Wednesday night as Jerusalem Municipality workers prepare to dismantle the yeshiva's illegal Old City huts. (Brian Hender)

British hitchhiker sues assailant

By DAN IZENBERG

Charlotte Gibb, the British tourist who was shot while hitchhiking from Eilat last year, yesterday sued her assailant, Daniel Okef, for NIS 1.2 million in damages in Jerusalem District Court.

Gibb's boyfriend, Max Hunter, was killed in the incident. Okef, a retired army officer who had given the two a ride, is currently on trial for the attack.

In her lawsuit, Gibb claimed she suffered physical and psychological damage and cannot afford the medical services she still requires as a result of the attack.

Gibb, who was left by Okef for dead and found by soldiers, was rushed to Soroka Hospital in Beersheba, where she underwent two operations before returning to England. According to the suit, she suffered an open fracture in her palm, fracture of her upper jaw, skull and facial injuries, fracture of the left eye socket, paralysis of facial nerves and severe trauma.

She said that some of the many treatments she still needs are not covered by the British National Health Service.

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Court to ministry: Explain abrogation of 'Russian mafia figure's' citizenship

By DAN IZENBERG

Attorney Yoram Sheftel told the High Court of Justice yesterday that the Minister of Interior had broken the law by abrogating Anton Malevsky's Israeli citizenship even though he had never been convicted of a crime.

After an hour-long discussion, the panel of three justices, headed by Supreme Court President Aharon Barak, issued an interim injunction, giving the state 30 days to explain why it had decided to do so.

Based on classified intelligence information, the police and the state attorney's office

believe that Malevsky, who owns legitimate food and diamond companies here, is a leading Russian mafia figure. He immigrated to Israel in 1994.

As such, he has personally commissioned several murders, trafficked heavily in drugs, and extorted money through threats, the police believe.

According to Sheftel, Malevsky has no criminal record and was only under investigation by Russian authorities for illegal weapons possession.

"What's at stake in this case is whether or not Israel belongs in the category of the world's darkest countries," said Sheftel. "He

has never been convicted of any crime and no indictment has ever been served against him."

"Nevertheless the state tells him: 'You are a murderer and a drug trafficker. We won't reveal to you the evidence we have against you, but we will take away your citizenship,'" Sheftel said.

Sheftel argued that his client had been denied a promised hearing before the Interior Ministry abrogated his citizenship. He said Malevsky had appeared before Interior Ministry official Raphael Cohen.

But Cohen, who recommended expelling Malevsky, did not have

access to the intelligence information allegedly detailing his mafia links.

Interior Minister Eli Suissa, who did see the material, decided to expel Malevsky without hearing his side.

Sheftel, who represented American mobster Meir Lansky in the early 1970s, told the High Court that in the Lansky case, the court had unambiguously interpreted the Law of Return to mean that a Jew could only be denied citizenship if he had been convicted of a crime.

He added that in the United States, the government is not allowed to deport an immigrant

on the basis of secret evidence. If there were allegations that the immigrant had lied in order to receive citizenship papers, the dispute would be settled by a court of law, Sheftel said.

This is what happened in the case of suspected war criminal John Demjanjuk, whom Sheftel also represented.

Shai Nitzan, representing the State Attorney's office, argued that Malevsky had lied to Interior Ministry officials who questioned him in 1994 before granting him citizenship, telling them he was not wanted by police and saying he had not committed any crimes.

Supreme Court ups sentence for abusive husband

By DAN IZENBERG

The Supreme Court has accepted a state appeal and increased the sentence of a man who had repeatedly abusing his ex-wife, including beating her over the head with an iron rod, from 20 months to 48 months in jail.

The ruling was handed down on Monday by Justices Eliyahu Mazza, Ya'acov Kedmi and Tova Strasberg-Cohen, and published yesterday.

The Beersheba District Court had sentenced Yoseph Liluf to 20 months in jail and 24 months suspended sentence for slapping and trying to choke his wife while they were still married, pushing her and threatening to kill her two years later, after their divorce, and striking her with an iron rod in front of their three-year-old daughter a few days afterwards.



Have diploma, will litigate

Israel Bar Association president Dror Hoter-Yishai presents a membership certificate to Yitzhak Dasa of Tel Aviv, the first immigrant from Ethiopia to become a lawyer, at a ceremony yesterday at Jerusalem's Teddy Stadium. Some 1,200 new lawyers joined the bar yesterday.

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Gerard Behar - Momix, Baseball, 2:30 p.m. (last performance)

NEWS in brief

Remands extended in Givatayim shooting

The Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court yesterday extended the remands of two suspects in the attempted murder of Roni Harari, the brother of the reputed head of the Ramat Amidar Gang, at the beginning of the month. Harari was sitting at a cafe in Givatayim when the suspects arrived on a motorcycle and one sprayed the cafe with fire from an assault rifle. Dotan Shukrun, 21, of Hod Hasharon, who is suspected of firing at Harari, was ordered held an additional 11 days; suspect Moshe Avitan, 32, from Rehovot, the driver of the motorcycle, was remanded another five days.

Minister threatens not to open new school year

Education Minister Yitzhak Levy yesterday threatened not to open the new school year in September due to sanctions by teachers that have prevented extracurricular activities.

Levy told reporters at a Tel Aviv press conference that the sanctions had "significantly harmed education since the beginning of the year."

The teachers have refused to accompany school trips unless they are paid overtime. Levy said the question of overtime payments is covered by the teachers' collective labor agreement and added: "Next year this won't happen. Either the school year will open [without this happening] - or we won't open it."

Drop in matriculants last year

There was a slight increase - 0.2 percent - in the number of pupils who took matriculation (bagrut) exams last year, but a 1.1% drop in the number of pupils who actually earned a matriculation certificate, Education Ministry officials revealed at a press conference yesterday.

A total of 37.7% of 12th graders earned the certificates last year, down from 38.8% the previous year.

Education Minister Yitzhak Levy expressed concern about the drop, but at the same time said the ministry would be focusing on reducing the drop-out rate, "because the less time pupils are out of school, we can inculcate values other than just bagrut."

Meshulam adherent sentenced for vandalism

Sinai Hasan, 26, of Rosh Ha'ayin, was sentenced yesterday to two-and-a-half years in prison and 18 months probation by the Tel Aviv District Court for vandalizing the traffic light control box at Kfar Hayarok junction last summer and attempting to do the same at Aluf Sadeh junction.

Two accomplices, who were minors when the crimes were committed, were sentenced to six months of community service. All three are adherents of cult leader Uzi Meshulam.

Hasan had previously been convicted of attacking policemen when a group of Meshulam's followers barricaded themselves in a Yehud home several years ago.

Man charged with threatening to kill Amor

A Migdal Ha'emek resident, David Ben-Yosef Levy, was charged yesterday in the Nazareth magistrate's court with threatening to kill MK Shaul Amor and rabbi David Grossman.

Prosecutor Tal Abraham, of the northern district attorney's office, claims Levy contacted Amor and his wife about getting a permit to open a stall in Migdal Ha'emek to service tourists. He also asked Amor, who serves as mayor of the town, for help in setting up a drug rehabilitation center that he would head.

When Levy got frustrated over the matter, he allegedly said in the presence of Amor's aides that unless it was settled, he would kill Amor and Grossman and "blow up the street."

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Appeasement at any cost

Early on in the first Clinton administration, then National Security Council staffer Martin Indyk concocted a tough-sounding policy toward Iran and Iraq known as "dual containment." Somewhere along the way, this policy has transmuted into an economic version of the famous Clinton bear-hugs, encouraging a range of nations to test America's will. The nuclear adventurism of India, and now Pakistan, are just warning signs indicating the price of American complacency. If the United States does not change course now, the world is likely to be a more dangerous place a few years from now, especially for Israel.

On four fronts at the moment, the Clinton administration is making a mockery of US laws and international agreements designed to stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. After stalling for months in deciding whether a \$2 billion French deal to develop Iran's energy sector triggered US sanctions (the law has a \$20 million threshold), Clinton decided to wave the law in exchange for a wispy European commitment to tighten export controls on Iran.

The implications of Clinton's capitulation on sanctions are clear. As *The Economist* wrote: "As America dithered over whether or not [French oil giant] Total should be punished for its defiance, other European companies... held back, waiting to see which way the decision would go. Some 11 major contracts, worth billions of dollars, are up for tender but, until now, the fear of reprisals has discouraged bids. Iran has every reason to exult." Iran has pined for nuclear weapons since the days of the shah, and has poured billions of its oil wealth into its quest. The collapse of US energy sector sanctions is a serious enough boost to Iran's ability to finance its nuclear ambitions. But even more dangerous is the American refusal to sanction Russian entities assisting Iran's missile program.

For over a year, Russian ex-military institutes and companies have been masterminding Iran's long-range missile program. The US Congress realized some time ago that the only thing that will convince the Russians to stop this lucrative business would be to deny them access to the even more lucrative space cooperation with the United States. This is essentially the aim of the Iran Missile Proliferation Sanctions Act, which passed the US Senate last week by a 90 to 4 vote. Rather than embracing the bill, the Clinton administration threatened a veto, leading to concerns that even if the bill becomes law it, too, will be waived.

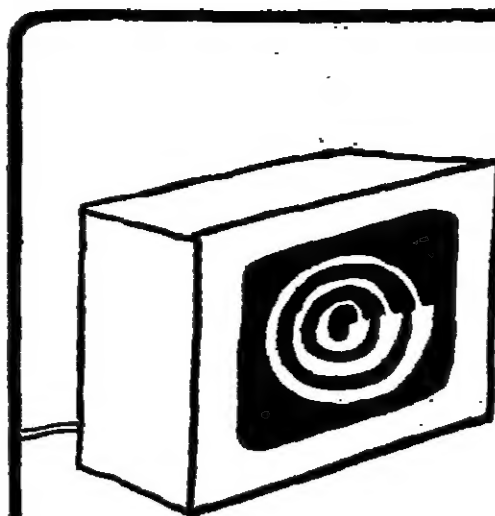
Meanwhile, in Iraq, the sanctions regime that the US almost went to war to defend is, by most accounts, collapsing. Former UN inspections

chief David Kay told a Senate committee last week that the sanctions were "sliding toward irrelevance." Former Pentagon official Richard Perle put things even more starkly, arguing that "Saddam's eventual political victory will be followed by a restoration of his military power." A sure sign of the deteriorating situation is that the current feisty UN inspections chief, Richard Butler, has been forced to accept a Russian "political adviser." Now even Butler has announced that he is preparing a "road map" for the lifting of sanctions, in the face of growing pressure from Russia, China, and France against the sanctions regime. The sense that Saddam is poised to break out of an untied straight jacket was increased by the US removing one of two carrier groups in the Persian Gulf - this despite the fact that no one believes that Iraq has revealed all of its capabilities, or will not rush to reproduce them the minute it is free of international supervision.

Finally, the Chinese have once again pledged to Prime Minister Netanyahu that they will not engage in weapons proliferation, a pledge they have made and broken many times before. It is China, after all, that recently tested its own nuclear weapons and has stationed missiles in Tibet, a move that India cites as prompting its own nuclear tests. Here, too, the Clinton administration is expected to veto a just-passed Congressional ban on satellite launches, and American defense contractors are reportedly expecting the post-Tiananmen Square ban on sales of military technology to weaken soon.

There is a thread running through all these policies: There are no consequences to threatening American interests. If anything, the Clinton instinct is to smother troublemakers with trade and carrots for better behavior. As Jacob Heilbrunn wrote in his profile of Clinton foreign policy architect Sandy Berger, "[His] focus is on creating a new global community that binds nations into a web of economic interests, military institutions, and political organizations.... Economic modernization leads inevitably to political freedom; the zero-sum game of realpolitik can give way to win-win Goidpolitik."

The problem with this theory is that it does not fit a world of a Saddam Hussein striving for revenge, of a Russia seeking influence by defying the US, and in which even the peaceful Indians have revealed their form of nuclearized nationalism. The Clinton-Berger theory sounds like free-market economics par excellence. Ironically, however, it makes the Marxist mistake of assuming that economic motives are always supreme, and fulfills the Marxist prophecy that capitalists will, in the end, sell the rope to hang themselves.



A week of improvisation

In one day, before he left for China, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made five speeches, reported to the weekly cabinet meeting, conducted three meetings of the inner cabinet, and held a dinner in honor of four delegations from the US Congress who had come for the jubilee celebrations and a mid-night meeting with Abu Aila. This was one day's schedule.

Working at such a giddy pace, it's hard for even so skillful an orator not to make slips of the tongue and, more seriously, it's hard for him to make a long-range assessment in hasty, off-the-cuff remarks.

For example, it sounded like improvisation when Netanyahu raised the suggestion that the US should give us \$1 billion to help pay for the second withdrawal from Judea and Samaria.

The visiting congressmen expressed a willingness to discuss such American support, but in spite of the tempting sound of \$1b., it would have been better to consider the subject in the light of our experience with the \$10b. in American loan guarantees for immigrant absorption, which the administration exploited in order to squeeze a commitment from the government to freeze settlements.

Netanyahu told the European Union that if it boycotts produce from the settlements in the Golan, Judea, and Samaria, Israel won't allow it to participate in the media with the Arabs. This also wasn't checked in detail beforehand.

This formulation is liable to create the impression that if the Europeans don't impose high duties on agricultural and industrial products from beyond the Green Line, Israel will agree to EU mediation between us and the Palestinians.

The fact is that the EU isn't

threatening us with a boycott for altruistic reasons, but as a means of pressuring Israel to agree to EU participation in the political mediation. Witness several statements by European politicians threatening that if Israel doesn't withdraw its objections to granting the EU equal status to the US, they will

The Oslo Agreement wasn't a peace agreement; it was only a joint declaration of principles which, if both sides had followed it, was meant to lead to a permanent settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. That would be a peace agreement. Since the negotiating process

The future Iranian missile should not be exploited in the present internal dispute over the extent of the IDF withdrawal

have to impose sanctions.

A commissioner of the EU tried this week to create the impression that the commission broke off dialogue with Israel at its own initiative, because of the conduct of the Netanyahu government. The fact is that it is Israel that is blocking the EU's efforts to become involved.

The many anti-Israeli decisions by European foreign ministers since the Venice Declaration haven't inspired Israel to rely on the EU as a fair mediator.

It's hard for Israel to grant the EU any position in the dispute, when one of its leading members, France, joined forces with Egypt in a diplomatic initiative directed against Israel: the convening of an international conference to force Israel to accept an imposed solution.

The same criticism can be leveled against Netanyahu's statement last weekend about the collapse of peace. The correction made by the prime minister's spokesman was no correction at all, since it stemmed from a false assumption.

between Israel and the Palestinians became a synonym for IDF withdrawal, instead of an arena for discussion on the fulfillment of the other principles of the Oslo Accords and their codification, there has been no progress.

The peace hasn't collapsed, because it has never existed. This has nothing to do with the date when power changed hands in Jerusalem.

MORE serious were the statements on the long-range missiles being developed by Iran. Although opposition leaders compete with Netanyahu in describing the imminent danger from Iran, this doesn't relieve the government of the responsibility for adding panic about Iranian long-range missiles, able to reach any location in Israel.

The opposition has been trying to exploit this danger in the internal dispute on the extent of the IDF withdrawal. And government officials are ringing alarm bells, as if sounding an alarm will save us. Far from it.

The immediate danger that pub-

lic statements can cause is many times greater than their propaganda value.

A country interested in increasing foreign investment must refrain from making statements liable to frighten off potential investors. A country striving for peace with its neighbors must refrain from giving them the impression that it is panicking in the face of the unconventional arms race between Iran and Iraq.

Anyone who says in public that the agreement with the Palestinians should be rushed through before the Iranians complete the construction of their long-range missiles is sending a message to the Palestinians that it's not in their interest to compromise now. They should hold up the negotiations until Israel is at the mercy of the Iranian missiles.

There is no certainty that Iran's missiles will be ready within a year. But the image of Israel in panic in the face of Iranian rearmament is helping Teheran right now; even before the first missile has been built or used.

The ringing alarm bells give the Iranians a feeling of leadership in the region, which enables them to say to the Palestinians: Only through the arms that Iran is accumulating will you be able to achieve significant political gains. We shouldn't dismiss any diplomatic route that is able to delay Iran's road race toward non-conventional weapons. But it should not be done at full volume. Public statements assist in strengthening Iran's status in the Muslim world, block the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and present Israel as an unsafe place, both for immigrants and foreign investors.

So startling statements should be filtered. Second thoughts are called for.

Voting for peace

GERALD M. STEINBERG

This does not guarantee successful implementation of the terms and an end to hatred, terrorism, and violence, but the vote provides a foundation for the next steps. When it comes to the disarming of terrorists and the establishment of cooperative mechanisms, the Irish leaders know that they have the support of the vast majority of their constituents. They also know that they will be

were beneficial. In calling for a "yes" vote, the former terrorist leaders publicly and unambiguously endorsed the peace process. As the agreement is implemented, their strong public statements will make it more difficult for them to return to violence.

At one stage in the public debate, following a suspension of the Irish Republican Army during the talks, Gerry Adams, the leader

It is not too late to hold a referendum, like that in Ireland, on the Oslo Accords

held accountable if they fail.

In contrast, the Oslo Accords have never been explicitly endorsed by either the Palestinians or the Israelis in a universal referendum. Few Palestinians remember the mutual recognition letter of September 9, 1993, in which Arafat explicitly recognized "the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security" and committed the Palestinians to a "peaceful resolution of the conflict," "free from violence." A universal vote might lead the Palestinians to take these commitments more seriously.

BEYOND the voting and the outcome, the process of public debate prior to the referendum is even more important to creating the foundations of a viable peace process. In Northern Ireland, opponents of the agreement, on both sides, made their cases before the public, forcing the proponents to explain why the concessions

of Sinn Féin, affiliated with the IRA, took a strong and unambiguous stand, declaring: "I appeal to everyone - everyone - to channel their anger and frustration at today's decision into calm and disciplined protest... We are still totally wedded to our peace strategy."

Until the process began, Adams was considered a terrorist leader, spent time in jail, and was boycotted by British political leaders. In defending the peace process and opposing violence, the transition was visible to all of his followers, as well as his opponents.

If only Arafat had acted similarly, the Palestinian-Israeli peace process would not be on life support in the intensive care wing of the political trauma center.

A public referendum would involve each member of the respective communities in the peace process. Instead of passively observing the discussions, they would have the opportunity to

actively contribute to or block the peace process. Every Palestinian would have to decide whether to support the rejectionists in Hamas, or to accept the concept of a Jewish state, to "put an end to decades of confrontation and conflict," to "live in peaceful coexistence and mutual dignity and security," as stated in the preamble to the Declaration of Principles.

Similarly, a referendum would give Israelis an opportunity to state their views clearly, and not in the context of broader elections where many other issues are involved.

Instead of focusing energies on percentages and other secondary issues, in order to revive the process we need to go back to the first principles of mutual acceptance and a renunciation of terrorism. It is not too late to hold a referendum on the Oslo Accords, in which proponents and opponents on each side would be forced to defend their views in public.

A political debate followed by a vote is a cathartic process, and provides a certain commitment. If the results show that the majority of Palestinians or Israelis do not accept the terms that have been negotiated, or are not convinced of the credibility of the other side, the leaders will have to return to the negotiating table.

On the other hand, if, as in the case of Northern Ireland, despite open vigorous debate and intense opposition, the leaders rally support and the vast majority of both groups turn out to support the agreement, the chances for a real and lasting peace for Palestinians and Israelis, rather than a temporary cease-fire, will improve significantly.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HALACHIC PERMISSION

Sir, - I must strongly differ with Rabbi Stuart Weiss's statement in his letter to the *Magazine* "A Religious Embrace" (May 8) that he does not know of a single posek of major status who permitted women to dance with the Torah scroll.

Indeed as early as 1972, my mentor and teacher Rabbi Soloveichik accepted my suggestion that in Lincoln Square Synagogue women - in a completely separate room, in which only women would be present - could not only dance with a Sefer Torah but could also read from the Torah as long as they did not make the blessings over it.

I have heard that in the current edition of *Tradition* magazine there is an excellent article by Professors Aryeh & Dov Primer documenting Rabbi Soloveichik's position in this regard.

Moreover, this article also cites Rabbi Nachum Rabinowitz as permitting women to dance with the

Sefer Torah and also cites Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein as theoretically permitting such a practice, but only if the request comes from the women and is not innovated by the rabbi.

My article was not meant to be used as a halachic response for all situations. As I suggested, much depends upon the customs of the particular congregations as well as the discussion which may be caused by departing from traditional practice.

I did, however, present the talmudic and rabbinic-halachic fundamental permissibility for women touching, and even reading from a Torah scroll. I therefore believe that when the situation warrants it, halachic permission may be granted.

SHLOMO RISKIN,
Chief Rabbi of Efrat

Efrat

IMPORTANT DISTINCTION

Sir, - Ronald Green's letter, "Rosenblum's venom" (May 22) has ignored an important distinction. The people of Israel may empathize with Dana, but she never "accepted her" as our representative.

Tolerating Jonathan Rosenblum is quite another matter. He does not purport to represent Israel and his column appears on an opinion

page where dissenting voices to his views are, if anything, in the majority.

Kudos to *The Jerusalem Post* giving him his say, but that is a far throw from appointing him a representative of anyone but himself.

J.E. COHEN

Netivot

A PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED

Sir, - The article "US pressure" (May 7) by Uri Dan and Dennis Eisenberg, only succeeded in raising my blood pressure rather than helping me understand the kind of pressure the US is supposedly using against Israel.

In my opinion, the writers do not seem to understand a number of facts.

First, the American administration, rather than bullying Israel, is only trying to remind the Israeli government that the Oslo Agreement did happen and that Israel did make certain pledges - despite the fact that the writers and Prime Minister Netanyahu would wish otherwise.

Secondly, the settlers are not victims in the same sense as the Jewish victims of Auschwitz, but rather are occupiers of illegal land.

Thirdly, violence is being committed by both sides and not just by the Palestinians.

Most importantly, Dan and Eisenberg must understand that there is a problem that has to be solved. Holding on to confiscated land in the name of security while denying others their rights will never solve anything.

RAYA AL KADI

Amman, Jordan.

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

65 years ago: On May 29, 1933, *The Palestine Post* reported that the antisemitic terror in Germany had been renewed. In various cities, crowds attacked Jewish stores and helpless police ordered to close.

In Jerusalem, a Jewish boy climbed to the roof of the German

Consulate, hauled down the Nazi flag and escaped.

25 years ago: On May 29, 1973, *The Jerusalem Post* reported that foreign minister Abba Eban had expressed to the US his "natural concern" over arms deals between the US and Arab

Gulf states. The Egyptian war preparations were also causing serious concern; they were more than just political ploys aimed at bolstering the Arab position at the forthcoming UN Middle East debate.

Alexander Zvielli

POSTSCRIPTS

IDENTICAL TWINS showing off their new cars collided, sending one brother hurtling into a house.

Geoffrey and Kristopher Punt, 18, smashed into each other in Alameda, California.

They were trying out their new cars when one brother ran through a stop sign and smashed into his twin's car, sending it spinning into

a house.

Neither Punt was hurt but the cars were badly damaged.

A CREAMY blue cheese from Denmark beat a fragrant list of 933 entries at the 1998 World Championship Cheese Contest.

A panel of international judges chose the Danish delight from 22

finalists at the 41-year-old biennial contest in Green Bay, Wisconsin, the cheese capital of America.

Runnerup was a 90-kg wheel of Emmentaler from Switzerland.

A DEER'S hobbling days are over thanks to efforts by a veterinarian and artificial-limb manufacturer to put him back on all fours.

Now the white-tailed deer has a leg up on other injured wildlife rather than a useless stump below the knee of his left front leg.

The clunking of his aluminum and acrylic prosthesis alerts bystanders to his movements, but the deer doesn't seem to mind. Veterinarian Albert Barnett said it soon will run and jump as well as any deer in the wild.

02/11/00 1:50

The case against a papal visit

SHLOMO AVINERI

It is common knowledge that the pope is planning to visit the Holy Land toward the year 2000. The reasons are obvious – and laudable: For a globe-trotting pontiff like John Paul II, a visit to the land of Christianity's origins would be a crown in a remarkable career; the aura of the millennium and the celebrations connected with the 2000th year since the birth of Jesus are an appropriate context for such a visit; and, last and not least, Pope John Paul's inner urge to contribute to Jewish-Arab reconciliation gives his pilgrimage an extra urgency.

Yet when looking at the prospects of a papal visit to this country, especially to Jerusalem, one cannot refrain from cautioning against it. It would do more harm than good – to the prestige and standing of the pope, to the Church, to Christian-Jewish relations, and possibly also to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

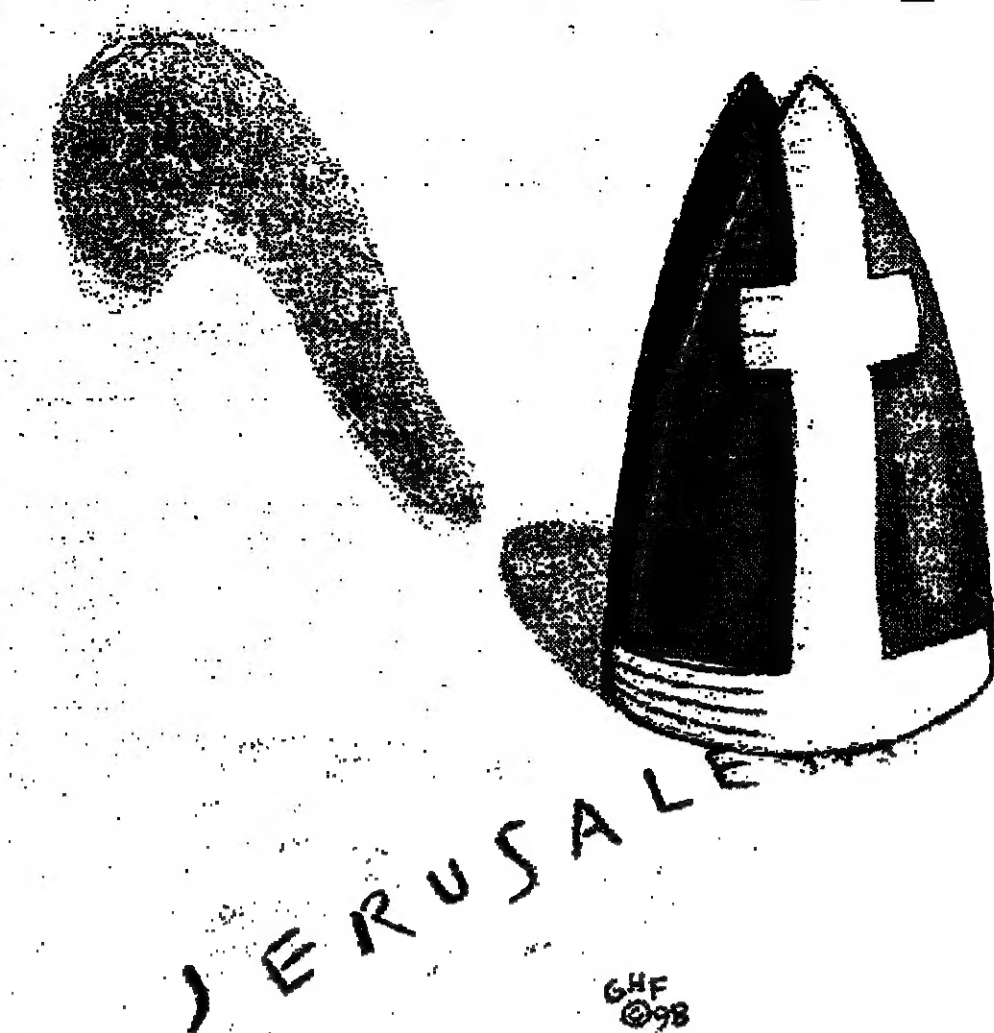
The Roman curia should seriously reconsider and reassess its plans and advise the pope that this pilgrimage, for all its personal devotion and message of peace and reconciliation, should not take place.

There is no doubt that personally, John Paul II is better suited than most, if not all, of his predecessors to embark on such a mission.

His personal history, as well as the annals of his pontificate, have proven an empathy to the Jewish people and its suffering unparalleled in the history of the Catholic Church; his visit to the synagogue in Rome did perhaps more than any doctrinal statement in the texts of the Second Vatican Council to suggest that the Church has turned a new page in its relations with what John Paul II consistently calls "our elder brethren," the people that also brought forth Mary and Jesus.

Yet all this will vanish the moment the pope sets foot in the Holy Land – and I choose this term judiciously. The Vatican has finally established diplomatic relations with Israel after many years of unnecessary delay, yet its position on the question of Jerusalem has not changed.

It is obvious that the Vatican does not recognize the Israeli annexation



of east Jerusalem: Does it unreservedly recognize Israel's sovereignty over west Jerusalem, or does it still adhere to its initial position of internationalism – with the Church (or churches?) having some role in the running of the city?

Diplomats can live with ambiguities, but when concrete problems have to be confronted in the immediate here-and-now, they can become dicey. The pope may hope to make a pilgrimage to the celestial city of Jerusalem, to *Civitas Dei*, but at every turn he will be confronted with the contentious, confrontational, and acerbic problem of the terrestrial Jerusalem.

When the pope arrives in

Jerusalem and is welcomed by the president to "united Jerusalem, the eternal capital of the State of Israel"

Under the present circumstances, such a visit would become a major blunder and embarrassment to all involved – if not worse

– will he acquiesce or demure? Or will Vatican diplomacy put a

prior veto on such an expression by the president of Israel? In both cases we shall have a major diplomatic incident.

Will he consent to be accompanied to the Old City by the mayor of Jerusalem? And at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher – will he be greeted just by the Latin patriarch, who is (as he should be) a Palestinian Arab, or perhaps he will insist on also being greeted by Faisal Husseini or another representative of the Palestinian Authority?

EVERY step is fraught with extremely delicate issues; no compromise can be easily devised when one deals not with a British foreign

secretary, but with the head of the Roman Catholic Church.

The pope, out of his goodwill and wish to reach out to Jews, will certainly want to meet with Israeli rabbis. Will the chief rabbis agree to meet him – and under what conditions? If the pope expresses his feeling for the tragedy of the Shoah, he will undoubtedly also express his sympathy for the plight of the Palestinians. Both sides will only hear that part they do not wish to hear.

In all probability, the pope's visit in 1999 or 2000 will fall close to the Israeli elections, which means that Israeli politicians will have to play to the galleries as much as possible, and some of the language which might be used could become offensive.

If the pope tries to defend the role of Pius XII during World War II, he will only alienate the Israelis, while the Palestinians, on the other side, will accuse him of caving in to the Jews.

In short, under the present circumstances, the pope cannot do right in such a visit, whatever he does. Everything, with the best intentions in the world, will go wrong.

Last and not least, just imagining the security arrangements connected with a papal visit – and with the masses of tourists and pilgrims coming here on this occasion – should give any sane person the creeps. Certainly the pope himself would not like his visit to Jerusalem to turn it into a city under siege and virtual occupation.

The time is not ripe, or as the Greeks would say, this is not the right *kairos*. If the peace process were on track, a papal visit could be the icing on the cake. Under the present circumstances, it will become a major blunder and embarrassment to all involved – if not worse.

Vatican diplomacy is wise, prudent, and careful. It sometimes knows how to proceed at a glacial pace. It should practice its wisdom and experience, and in all humility beg the head of the Catholic Church: not yet, not yet.

The writer, professor of political science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, is a former director-general of the Foreign Ministry.

Middle Israel

AMOTZ ASA-EL

Celestial progress

The pilgrims landed, worthy men
And saved the wreck from raging seas
They fell upon their knees
And then upon the aborigines

Arthur Guiterman, *The Pilgrim's Thanksgiving*

It must have been an awesome sight.

Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from everywhere and anywhere between Rome, Alexandria, Babylon, and Hebron converging on the hills of Judea after having journeyed by foot, mule, and boat to God's city upon a hill.

Once in Jerusalem, they would purify in ritual baths, prepare their offerings, and eventually join the throngs heading toward God's house. Once on the Temple's threshold, just outside today's Al Aksa Mosque, they would condone people walking against traffic, for those were mourners, albeit complete strangers from far flung lands. And once atop the

the ignorant pilgrim has been traditionally abused, one need not go farther than Netivot, where shenanigans like selling holy-water bottles or setting fire on a deceased Kabbalist's grave are commonplace.

THERE was, to be sure, an entirely different kind of pilgrimage, one conducted by a select few who left everything behind and headed in somber solitude toward a premature encounter with Mt. Moriah like Rabbi Moshe Haim Luzzatto, who 250 years ago found refuge in the Holy Land after having been cast out for allegedly espousing Sabbatean messianism.

For the Days to Come, the prophet Isaiah envisioned a much happier, universalistic, pilgrimage experience whereby "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all the nations shall flow unto it."

When some of those nations finally came here from beyond

As if he had just emerged from yet another showdown between holier-than-thou Wakf and Ateret Cohanim clerics – Bunyan's pilgrim noticed there was a way to hell even from the gates of heaven

Temple Mount, they would present a priest with their first fruits, offer their sacrifices, and join the multitudes in prayer.

Once outside the Temple, they would join a massive, multi-lingual trade fair which inevitably evolved where so many people, goods and cash suddenly met. Indeed, in a world where one's horizons seldom exceeded the nearby village, such a trip's breadth, sights and smells would be uplifting enough to fuel an entire lifetime's spirituality.

AND yet, like so many other innocent ideas, pilgrimage has also been – and remains – marred by disharmony, abuse, and downright bigotry.

"An Aramean ready to perish was my father," the pilgrim would tell the priest in presenting his first fruits, alluding to Jacob the Patriarch, before succinctly describing the exodus from Egypt. What do parents have to do with one's first fruit? Everything.

It takes no Freudian to detect in this formula the Oedipal echoes of a hard-working man who tends to trace his failures to his lineage, while attributing his success to himself. All too frequently one's burning desire to brag to daddy about one's professional conquests is frustrated by the latter's disappearance. To those pilgrims, Judaism offered the reminder that what one perceives as one's own achievement isn't but God's generosity, and that all people have one dad, whose omnipresence defies biology.

But people, even priests, are people, and it wasn't long before pilgrims were abused by cynical clerics like the sons of Eli the prophet, who habitually seduced the women who glibly came to Shilo with their offerings.

Similarly, the great sums of money which were amassed through the transfer of titles were often misused, even embezzled, by subsequent generations. To get an idea of how easily and commonly

the horizon, however, they were Crusaders who stormed this wretched city with drawn swords that ultimately uncorked a deluge of innocents' blood; not unlike English preacher John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), where an intensively adventurous odyssey to the celestial city leads through a Doubting Castle and a Valley of the Shadow of Death, laden with ever-skirmishing demons like Apollyon and Giant Despair and cunning hypocrites like Talkative and Ignorance.

At a certain point – as if he had just emerged from yet another showdown between holier-than-thou Wakf and Ateret Cohanim clerics – Bunyan's pilgrim noticed "there was a way to hell even from the gates of heaven."

With Christians of this or that denomination clinging onto a forlorn, but time-honored ladder in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, lest their stake in that gloomy structure be compromised, Moslem mobs routinely stoning worshippers at the Western Wall; and Jewish priesthood-cadets elbowing their way into predominantly Arab quarters, one must wonder whether God cares any more.

How pathetic the Almighty must find them all, scrambling, scratching, scamping, and stampeding in their dingy familiar, selfish, and ever-illusory search for the Creator's warm bosom.

Our ancestors, having understood the need to de-politicize pilgrimage, decided Jerusalem would not belong to any tribe.

It shouldn't take a Unitarian to realize that God cannot be expropriated, whether by municipal decree, clerical edict, real-estate trickery, or daylight thuggery.

Without its unique blending of shirebel chants, muezzin cries and church-bell tolls – as well as the people behind them – Jerusalem won't live up to Isaiah's great expectations. Why is this so hard to understand?

Shavuot and the limits of self

Shavuot is the unsung holiday on the Jewish calendar. It lasts only one day (two in the Diaspora), has no special mitzvot associated with it, and lacks any beloved customs, unless one relishes staying up all night. (Please, no angry letters from cheese cake lovers.)

The overwhelming majority of non-religious Jews around the world do not observe the festival in any way, and are probably not even aware of its significance.

At first glance, the low-key nature of the holiday is hard to comprehend, for the day marks the defining moment in world history: the revelation at Sinai. But at another level, the nature of Shavuot conveys a subtle message about the manner in which Torah is received.

One theme runs through the rabbinic literature, on the receipt of Torah: Only one who has humbled himself is capable of receiving the Torah. Torah is compared to water. In what way? Just as water naturally flows to the lowest point, so Torah flows only to one who has made himself lowly. Pride, self-assertion, the desire for notice are all incompatible with true understanding of the Torah.

When God came to give the Torah, says one midrash, all the mountains put forth their claims – this one pointing to its, exalted

height, another to its beauty. Only Sinai did not advance any claim; as it is said, "What difference does it make whether the Torah comes into the world through me? The only thing that matters is that the Torah is given." Therefore Sinai was chosen.

Another midrash asks why the Torah was given in the desert, and answers: Only one who makes himself ownerless like the desert can acquire Torah.

Making oneself ownerless means not only the sacrifice of all physical luxury, but also allowing one's whole being to be shaped by the Torah without regard to one's preconceived ideas and beliefs.

The great literary critic Lionel Trilling nicely captured this strain in rabbinic thought. Rabbinic literature, he observed, lacks any trace of the heroic ideal. "The rabbis, in speaking of virtue, never mention the virtue of courage, which Aristotle regarded as basic to the heroic character."

To be sure, they did not lack courage itself; many would die for their faith. What they lacked was the Greek concept of *agora*, of proving oneself for the sake of proving oneself. The Greek hero is in essence an actor, his virtue reflected in the impression made on others.

Such self-conscious efforts to

perform art – designer ceremonies, with the celebrant at center stage. At the typical modern Jewish wedding, for instance, the traditional formula, "You are sanctified to me with this ring according to the laws of Moses and Israel," is likely to be replaced by "I promise to help you grow as a person."

Commenting on one such ceremony, art critic David Geiderman notes that something vital is lost with the refusal to recite the traditional formula – a connection to Jewish customs and brides throughout the centuries.

"The whole point of a wedding ceremony is to offer the couple a chance to enter into something bigger than themselves," he writes in *Commentary*. "But in modern America, there is nothing bigger than yourself. The infantile insistence that religious ritual conform to you rather than the other way around is the essence of modern American culture, and is strangling Judaism."

To the extent that such ceremonies take note of God at all, the implicit message is: If You, God, want to have a relationship with me, it will have to be on my terms. Can one imagine someone designated to be knighted by the queen, informing her that he finds the knight ceremony degrading and insists on designing one more to

Nothing could be further removed from the modern mind than this diminished sense of self. Part of the reason that Jews today have such a hard time connecting to Torah is that they are so busy projecting their own voices that they can no longer hear the still, small voice of God.

Modern Jewish religious ceremony has become a form of per-

JONATHAN ROSENBLUM

sonal art – designer ceremonies, with the celebrant at center stage. At the typical modern Jewish wedding, for instance, the traditional formula, "You are sanctified to me with this ring according to the laws of Moses and Israel," is likely to be replaced by "I promise to help you grow as a person."

Jews today have such a hard time connecting to Torah because they are so busy projecting their own voices that they can no longer hear the still, small voice of God

The truth about conversion

URI REGEV

The upcoming festival of Shavuot is an opportunity to look anew at the issue of conversion, as we read the story of our ancestor Ruth, the prototypical convert to Judaism.

Last year at this time, the conversion bill controversy threatened to drive a wedge between Israel and Diaspora Jewry. The proposed bill attempted to undo a landmark High Court ruling that opened the door to recognizing Reform and Conservative conversions. In the shadow of the bill, however, stand scores of potential converts who force us to look at the basic issue in controversy – *kabbalat mitzvot*, accepting the yoke of the commandments.

Here is a sampling of cases to illustrate the problem: In Bankovsky, the Haifa Rabbinic Court nullified the conversion (and marriage) of a woman who underwent an Orthodox conversion prior to her marriage, after she admitted she was not observing Shabbat and kashrut.

In Pelonit, the Rehovot Rabbinic Court nullified the Orthodox conversion of an adopted infant when the adopting family admitted it was not observant and was unwilling to commit to sending the child to an Orthodox school.

Recently, a *beit din* nullified the conversion of Russian immigrants who chose, after their Orthodox con-

version, to return to their non-religious kibbutz.

The Orthodox view that Ruth converted under the same procedure that the Chief Rabbinate pursues today is highly questionable. The prevailing scholarly view is that conversion via a *beit din* did not exist during the biblical era. It represents a reform introduced by the sages of the Oral Law.

In the biblical period, people entered into the Jewish fold by a process of assimilation and not an act of formal admittance. The Talmud (Yebamot 46a) records a debate among Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, and the other sages as to whether *milla* (circumcision) or *tevilla* (ritual immersion) or both constitute a valid conversion. What we can conclude from the debate is that, at that time, no firm and binding view existed as to the formal ingredients required for conversion.

It is time the truth be told about the conversion dilemma. The main area of dispute is that of *kabbalat mitzvot*, one of the three traditional requirements developed by the post-biblical Oral Law. It is a well known fact, however, that the predominant majority of those converting today do not choose to undertake an observant mode of life, including those sincerely wishing to enter into the Jewish fold, whether motivated by the desire to marry or by theological reasons. This is precisely, however,

what the Orthodox rabbinic establishment is demanding.

Rabbinic court rulings in the above cases are supported by the halachic opinion of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, who writes that, not only are we not to accept a convert if there is no sincere acceptance of *mitzvot*, but "even if he says that he accepts the *mitzvot*, if we witness that he does not truly accept them,

The predominant majority of those converting today do not choose to undertake an observant mode of life

[his declaration] is nothing" and we nullify his conversion even retroactively.

There is, however, another school of thought in the Orthodox tradition. Former Sephardi chief rabbi Ben-Zion Uziel faced the situation of immigrants from an assimilated community who wished to convert children born to non-Jewish wives without becoming religiously observant. He analyzed the halachic

sources with sensitivity and understanding of the historic challenge facing Israel and the Jewish people.

He concluded that "we do not demand the convert to fulfill *mitzvot* and the *beit din* does not need to know if the convert will fulfill them. Otherwise, converts would not be accepted into the Jewish fold... It is permitted and it is a *mitzva* to admit male and female converts even when we know that they are not going to observe all of the *mitzvot*."

THE Chief Rabbinate's position today not only ignores the liberal possibilities in the Halacha, it is hypocritical. In an interview (*Ha'aretz*, November 24, 1996), Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yisrael Lau gives the impression of being highly principled in his approach. He explains that a rabbi is not a legislator, his hands are tied in matters of Halacha which is unchangeable, divine legislation. "The major halachic obstacle that stands between Orthodox and non-Orthodox conversion is the requirement of *kabbalat mitzvot* and here there is no room for compromise."

Later, however, Lau admits that in practice most converts deceive the *beit din*. They learn the material for the exam by rote and declare their intention to observe the *mitzvot* but, afterwards, adopt the nonobservant lifestyle of most Israeli Jews.

Lau's response to this hypocrisy –

"So what, in every area people cheat" – is hardly a principle justifying the campaign of the Orthodox rabbinic and political establishment to delegitimize Reform and Conservative conversions in Israel.

Insistence on this rigid position is a barrier to the needs and challenges of contemporary Jewry and the waves of immigration from assimilated Jewish communities.

The solution is clear. The quicker the authority to oversee conversions is removed from the Chief Rabbinate the better off the Jewish people and the State of Israel will be. If, however, the Chief Rabbinate is willing to face the urgency of the hour and adopt a conversion policy that does not require false promises, does not condone retroactive nullification on grounds of non-observance, and accepts the legitimacy of liberal and diversified expressions of Jewish life, then let it come out and say so openly and courageously.

There is ample ground in tradition for that position and it will heal tensions between religious and secular and between Orthodox and liberal streams in Judaism. Only then can we hope to move towards a truly historical compromise over conversion.

The writer is a rabbi and attorney who serves as the executive director of the Movement for Progressive Judaism's Israel Religious Action Center.

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or Dorit Haral, 02-525 1435.

Join us as we proudly salute our matriarch and role model

Els Bendheim
upon the official opening of
"CHARLIE'S FLOOR"
at Shaare Zedek Medical Center on June 7, 1998

in memory of our beloved father
CHARLES H. BENDHEIM 77

Your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are inspired by your wisdom, commitment and ongoing endeavors on behalf of countless Jewish educational, medical and communal causes.

Judith and Harris Guedalia Jack and Giti Bendheim
Debra and Barry Eisenberg Aviva and Marvin Sussman
Philip and Donna Bendheim Edna and Avera Zussman
Karen and William Levine

Pirate now, pay later

Few people read a newspaper news story from beginning to end unless they are personally involved or have a special interest. They glance at the headline and the first, maybe second, paragraph. When you see a reader totally engrossed — it's the sports, business, health or entertainment section.

Increasingly, and interestingly, it's the Internet and computer section. Most serious international newspapers now pay more attention to the apparently insatiable demand for comprehensible news from the front lines of information technology.

Every day some new concern is voiced about this digital monster that is growing faster than Godzilla. New concerns are far above the trashy old-hat stuff of pornography, bomb recipes and white supremacy nuts. A major row is in full cry on and off the Internet about the collapsing world of intellectual property rights.

Information wants to be free, no one wants to pay for it. The result? Lots of information creators are getting screwed, and lots of white-collar pirates and corporate raiders are starting to get rich at their expense.

Pay for rights in Israel? Freier!

Israel has long been the Lilliputian Street of Software City, where you can get a nice deal on any juicy computer program for a "pssst" in the right ear. For a place that considers its talents as mainly intellectual, and that is now at the forefront of information technology, this

cavalier attitude to paying other people for the programs they wrote is remarkable.

However, chickens come home to roost. The price is, pirate now, pay later. Not only Israel, but scores of other states and thousands of individuals have so undermined the entire system of copyright, royalties and reproduction rights that the whole system is collapsing in chaos.

Why should we care? Because today it may be fun or smart not to pay Bill Gates for that copy of Word 7 on your computer, but tomorrow don't howl when your article or painting, or the latest release of your son's rock band, are distributed free on the Internet and not one of you earns an agora in royalties.

There currently are some 26,000 Internet sites offering illegal music. From the corner of your living room you can download the best bits of your favorite albums, using freely available software (called MPEG3). In three minutes it captures a perfect digital-CD quality piece from a music web site.

You can dump the selections on a rewritable compact disk, print a color label from the site (sorry, graphic artist), put it all together and sell it to all your pals for ten shekels a time.

The only thing you can't download is the plastic box so, what the hell, make that 12 shekels.

Shrink rap
Nobody suffers? In the end, everyone is going to suffer.

See PIRATE, Page 15

Column One



Thomas O'Dwyer

Ruble stabilizes after central bank hikes lending rate to 150%

By MARTIN NESIRKY

MOSCOW (Reuters) — President Boris Yeltsin sought to reassure nervous markets yesterday that Russia had enough reserves to avoid financial collapse, and told his team at a Kremlin crisis meeting to focus on defending the ruble.

Yet despite the president's soothing words, Deputy Finance Minister Oleg Vyugin made clear Russia could still need extra support from the International Monetary Fund to help it out of a tight financial squeeze.

Russian shares rose sharply and the battered national currency strengthened against the dollar, both responding to the central bank's tripling of interest rates to 150 percent on Wednesday to defend the ruble.

"Foreign investors should feel confident there will be no collapse of financial markets in Russia," Yeltsin said in televised comments at a meeting with Prime Minister Sergei Kiriyenko, his finance minister and central bank chairman.

"We have enough reserves if it comes to the worst but we do not want to be on the edge all the time," said Yeltsin, who called the meeting in the knowledge that political stability and the fate of his reforms rest on the economy.

He said corporate and private tax-dodgers' pockets should be emptied into the cash-starved budget.

"We should force them," he said. "We know the names." Vyugin made clear Russia had still not pulled right back from the brink. He said the IMF's next \$670 million slice of a \$9.2 billion loan might not be enough, and additional support would help solve Russia's financial problems quickly.

"If we are talking about any support it must be on quite a different scale," he told a news conference.

The IMF's top regional expert, John O'Donnell, was due to arrive in Moscow for talks late yesterday and is expected to discuss the next tranche of the loan.

Many traders now expect the IMF to approve the tranche almost immediately, and suggest it could be followed by an emergency



A currency-exchange office employee changes the US dollar-ruble rate in downtown Moscow yesterday. Despite Yeltsin's reassuring statements, Deputy Finance Minister Oleg Vyugin said Russia could still need special aid from the IMF to help it out of a tight financial squeeze. (AP)

short-term deal of \$5 billion or more.

Austrian Finance Minister Rudolf Eisinger said in Vienna that his country would be prepared to back a new IMF loan.

"From a west European perspective these events are hardly reassuring," he said, referring to the Russian turmoil that saw shares

plunge by 11% on Wednesday.

In the Kremlin, Yeltsin said foreign investors needed to be reassured so they would inject funds rather than withdraw them.

The 67-year-old president also said he would call foreign leaders, including US President Bill Clinton and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, to ask them to lend

moral, rather than financial, support.

Clinton said on Wednesday he had faith in Kiriyenko's team.

One of Russia's three leading news agencies, RIA, quoted central bank chief Sergei Dubinin as saying Yeltsin had ordered him and Finance Minister Mikhail Zadornov to focus on maintaining

ruble stability. Zadornov said the Russian people would not feel the effects of the crisis. On the streets of Moscow, many have yet to realize what is happening.

"Crisis? Our life is one permanent crisis," said pensioner Anatoly Belsky with a shrug of the shoulders. "So what's new?" Yeltsin, who spent Wednesday at an off-town residence, called Thursday's meeting after heavy falls on Russian financial markets, sharp rises in treasury bill yields and investor fears of a devaluation of the ruble — something the government has consistently ruled out.

International credit rating agency Fitch IBCA said on Thursday that "bold action" from the Russian authorities, with international support, could avert a "damaging devaluation".

Another agency, Standard and Poor's, said late on Wednesday it was reviewing Russia's BB-minus long-term foreign currency rating for a possible downgrade because of "intensifying fiscal and debt service pressures".

Cutting the rating would make it more expensive for Russia to borrow in hard currency on international capital markets.

A banking source said Kiriyenko, only a month in his job, met four influential bankers overnight at their request and told them the government would stick to its tough fiscal policy and an austerity programme.

"The bankers left reassured," the source said after the late-night talks with Vladimir Potanin of Uneximbank, Most Group chief Vladimir Gusinsky, Menatep banking group head Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Alexander Smolensky of SBS-AgroBank.

Markets seemed reassured, too. The benchmark Russian RTS shares index had risen 5.66 percent to 197.83 by 0900 GMT, clawing back about half the previous day's losses. The ruble strengthened to 6.1490 to the dollar after 6.1750 on Wednesday.

In addition, the central bank said it had bought tens of millions of dollars, responding to a demand for rubles which it had created by selling the US currency and raising rates.

Economists said the spillover to Asia from Russia's woes would be limited. But Eastern European currencies, notably the Polish zloty, have felt the heat.

Russia has largely put its problems down to external factors such as financial problems in Asia and currency speculators.

On the shloshim of the passing of our beloved

LESLIE ZACK ז"ל

we will honor his memory on Friday, June 5, 1998 at 10:30 a.m. at the Har Tamir section of Har Hamenuhot, Givat Shaul, Jerusalem.

Zack, Schwartz, Green and Glustein Families

חזקת מצבה

The unravelling for

Rabbi PHILIP H. WEINBERG ז"ל

of Los Angeles, California

will take place on Tuesday, June 2, 1998, at 4:30 p.m. at Har Hamenuhot Cemetery, Givat Shaul, Jerusalem. We shall meet at the main parking lot at 4:15 p.m. Bus leaving from the Jerusalem Plaza Hotel at 3:30 p.m.

The Weinberg Family

RAMOT SHAPIRA EDUCATIONAL CENTRE

mourns the passing of
Founder and President

Rabbi Dr. YAACOV VAINSTEIN

a great leader and educator

We send our deepest sympathy to his family

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3 Guatemala St., Kiryat Hayovel, Jerusalem.
May you be comforted among
the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Bush-Mar Building and Investment Co. Ltd.
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offer condolences to
Leile Krieser
on the passing of

NORBERT KRIESER

The International Forum for a United Jerusalem
mourns the death of

NAT KAMENY ז"ל

for many years our representative in the U.S. and
Vice-Chairman of the ADL

Sincere condolences to the family

Eliyahu Tal
Chairman

Jack Padwa
Honorary Secretary



The Anti-Defamation League
mourns the passing of

NAT KAMENY

Former ADL National Vice-Chairman

Abraham H. Foxman
National Director

Howard P. Berkowitz
National Chairman

Rabbi David Rosen
Director, Israel office

Russians shrug off latest economic crisis

MOSCOW (Reuters) — Crisis? What crisis? Muscovites yesterday took Russia's latest economic woes in stride as the government and central bank scrambled to avert a meltdown of the country's young financial markets.

"Crisis? Our life is one permanent crisis, so what's new?" asked pensioner Albert Belsky with a shrug of the shoulders.

Engineer Vladimir, rolling up his umbrella after a spring shower, agreed. "Most Russians don't understand capital markets," he said. "This is still a very abstract crisis for us."

As they spoke, President Boris Yeltsin was ordering his government to defend the ruble at all costs and preparing to telephone foreign leaders to seek their moral support.

Share prices started heading back upwards on yesterday after sharp falls on Wednesday and

pressure on the ruble, which prompted the central bank to triple its key interest rates to 150 percent. The ruble has so far held fairly steady at around 6.1 per dollar. This has kept a firm lid on prices and prevented a return to the hyperinflation of the early part of this decade.

"So long as people receive their wages and pensions, and so long as prices don't take off again, they think the situation is more or less normal," said Vladimir.

Unlike millions of state workers and pensioners across the vast Russian Federation, most Muscovites do not suffer big delays in their wage or pension payments.

"We are patient people. And we know Russia has big economic possibilities. I think that the central bank is taking the right measures. I don't think there will be any devaluation (of the ruble),"

BACKGROUND

said journalist Yuri, shopping in central Moscow.

Several Muscovites interviewed said devaluation would inevitably mean higher prices and greater social unrest.

"But nobody wants a social explosion and the authorities will do everything possible to avoid one," said Vladimir.

But not everyone was so sanguine about the government's ability to control the situation.

"Why should we have any trust in them? They tell us one thing and do another. They told us the weather would be fine today and it goes and rains on us," said Ivan Deyushin, a young man selling

stationery near the entrance to a

subway station. Teacher Alla said she was worried about the future but she did not understand the causes of the current crisis. "People talk about Indonesia but what has that got to do with us? Indonesia is a long way away," she said.

The start of Russia's latest market turmoil coincided with the wave of looting and rioting in Indonesia that triggered President Suharto's resignation after 32 years at the helm. As an emerging market, Russia is vulnerable to shockwaves from Asia's economic crisis.

But there were no signs of increased activity on yesterday at Moscow's numerous foreign exchange booths, and Russians appeared to be heading the government's advice not to panic and trade in their rubles for dollars or other foreign currency.

"I'm no economist but I don't

think the ruble will be devalued. I haven't noticed any difference in the exchange rate," said Alexei Timofeyev, hawking his drawings of famous Moscow landmarks.

"The central bank has plenty of money, I don't think there will be any devaluation," he said.

Timofeyev, in his early 20s, said he was more concerned with a fall in the number of tourists coming to Moscow.

"Maybe they have stopped coming because it's too expensive here," he said, referring to a common complaint among visitors to the Russian capital. Hotel, restaurant and other prices in Moscow often exceed those in much richer Western countries.

"If the ruble is devalued, at least we might get more tourists because things will get cheaper for them," said another young trader.

NATO to raise Kosovo profile

By DOUGLAS HAMILTON

BRUSSELS (Reuters) — NATO is taking further steps to bolster the security of partner states bordering the Serbian province of Kosovo, including a land-air military exercise in Albania, diplomatic sources said on Thursday.

Foreign ministers of the 16-member alliance, holding regular talks in Luxembourg, were expected to endorse plans agreed earlier this week by their ambassadors to the North Atlantic Council, the sources said.

They would also be discussing the situation with Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, whose permanent representative at NATO headquarters in Brussels has already been consulted on the plans.

The aim is to stabilize the region, prevent the conflict from spreading and promote a negotiated solution between Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and ethnic Albanians demanding independence for Kosovo.

NATO ministers were expected

to order the alliance to go ahead with a package of immediate measures to display solidarity and bolster the confidence of Kosovo's nervous neighbors, Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

In addition, they were expected to assign military commanders to examine longer-term options in case the crisis escalates, including deployment of NATO monitors and observers along the province's borders and the possibility of declaring a no-fly zone in the region to prevent the use of Yugoslav air power.

Among immediate steps planned by the alliance, a military exercise already planned for Macedonia in September was being enlarged and extended and NATO was going to prepare the former Yugoslav military base at Krivolac as a permanent training site.

NATO warships will visit the Albanian port of Durres, and a five-man NATO "cell" will be established in Tirana, the Albanian capital.

No date has been made public so

far for the military exercise in Albania, which is expected to be held as soon as possible in the summer months.

NATO had earlier ruled out an exercise with Albania's severely depleted armed forces, but officials said the idea was revived when the alliance began examining a wide range of options to contain the Kosovo violence.

The Western allies are using political, economic and, if necessary, military pressure to persuade Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to negotiate autonomy for Kosovo's large ethnic Albanian majority.

Talks have begun but fighting between Albanian separatist fighters and Yugoslav army and special police units continues. The death toll since the start of the year is over 200.

Albania and Macedonia, both members of the NATO "partnership for peace" program, have asked the alliance to protect them against any spillover of the violence which could ignite a wider war in the Balkans.

Bulgaria irked by US official's comment

SOFIA (Reuters) — Bulgaria yesterday angrily rejected remarks by US mediator Richard Holbrooke that independence for the troubled Serb province of Kosovo might prompt it to seize part of Macedonia in a general scramble to redraw borders.

"Bulgaria has never given grounds for allegations about its territorial or any other claims towards the Republic of Macedonia," foreign ministry spokesman Radko Vlaikov said in a written statement.

Bulgaria, which has complex historical relations with the former Yugoslav republic, does not recognize the Macedonian language which it considers a dialect of Bulgarian. But it does recognize Macedonia as an independent state.

Vlaikov said Bulgaria had been the first state to recognize Macedonia under its present name after it broke away from former Yugoslavia.

He said Bulgaria shared Holbrooke's concerns over the situation in Kosovo and was working hard together with the international community to find a peaceful solution.

"This is why we categorically reject any insinuations over Bulgaria's 'aggressive intentions'," the statement said.

Holbrooke, the architect of the Bosnian peace accord, painted a gloomy picture of the prospects for Kosovo, whose population is overwhelmingly ethnic Albanian. If it should succeed in attempts to break away from Serb-dominated Yugoslavia.

"If Kosovo goes independent then Albania will say, 'Well, it (Kosovo) is part of greater Albania'. Then the Albanians in Macedonia will say, 'Hey, we want to join greater Albania, we want to get out from under these Macedonians,'" Holbrooke declared in an interview in New York.

התאחדות ישראלית

The Jerusalem Post, Friday, May 29, 1998

NEWSinFOCUS

9



Netanyahu's election slogan: a secure peace (Israel Sun)

The survivor

'From screw up to screw up, his strength increases.' That's how one Likud MK describes Binyamin Netanyahu's first 24 months in office. But not everyone agrees. Herb Keiron assesses the prime minister's performance

Exactly two years ago, on May 29, 1996, prime ministerial hopeful Binyamin Netanyahu strode into Likud headquarters in Tel Aviv and told, glum party activists not to give up, hope because "it isn't over yet."

The gloom in the hall stemmed from television exit polls that predicted a thin victory for Shimon Peres. Netanyahu's appearance, alongside his truculent ally, David Levy, elicited pity.

"Admit defeat, man" was a sentiment someone must have voiced somewhere. Much of the country went to bed that night believing Peres had won, only to wake up in the morning and learn that Netanyahu had prevailed.

Those looking for a metaphor for Netanyahu's first two years in power need look no further than those toasty-turvy hours. Just when you think Bibi is through, he's back.

The first 24 months of the Netanyahu government have been punctuated by crisis after crisis: The Sharon appointment; the Western Wall Tunnel; the Hebron withdrawal; the Bar-On Affair; the Begin resignation; Har Homa; the Meridor resignation; the Mashal Affair; the near putsch inside Likud; the Lieberman resignation; the Levy/Gesher breakaway; the tension with Clinton; and, of course, the ongoing crisis with the Palestinians over the Oslo Accords.

After most of these crises, there has been talk by some, and hope among others, that any minute the curtain will fall on the prime minister. But it never does. Not only has Netanyahu remained in place, but his standing, judged by public opinion polls, is now stronger than ever.

After the bungled attempt to assassinate Khaled Masha'al in September, Netanyahu was trailing Ehud Barak by 15 to 20 percentage points. Last week, a Yediot Achronot poll put the two neck and neck in a two-way race, with a number of other polls giving him a slight lead.

"From screw up to screw up," says Likud MK Meir Sheizel, "his strength increases."

Were historians to stand in judgment of Netanyahu based on his first two years, said Bar-Ilan University lecturer Yehudit Auerbach, the conclusion would be decidedly negative.

But, she added, the Netanyahu years are very much a work still in progress.

"History judges men by results, and his immediate results are not positive," said Auerbach, who is working on a study about what the views as Netanyahu's ongoing war with the country's elite.

Among the immediate results she cites are steering the country into diplomatic isolation, an icy

shoulder from the Arab world, and galloping unemployment. "In every aspect things today look bad, but much of the nation is giving him credit that we are on the way to something better," she said.

"Many people believe he can lead us to something better because, against all the odds and predictions, he has endured," Auerbach added.

Netanyahu has deliberately made the future a dominant theme in his rhetoric, says media consultant Benny Cohen, who served as media adviser to Yitzhak Rabin during 1994-95.

"The easiest way to escape from problems is to say I erred, but now will change," said Cohen. "If you notice, Bibi always looks forward. All his speeches are full of words like 'We will do, we will bring, we will build.'"

"If someone says, 'But wait a minute, you haven't done anything,' the reply is 'Ah, but I will.'"

Cohen is no historian, and he makes no bones about his dislike for Netanyahu. But, he says, Netanyahu is, to a large extent, achieving what he set out to do.

"There are two parameters by which one can judge how a person is doing his work: by the direction, and by the effectiveness," Cohen said. "I think Netanyahu is effective, but I think he is mistaken in the direction. If his direction were different, if he was the head of Labor, and was interested in true peace, I'd say that's great."

That point of view is particularly telling, considering that much of the criticism of Netanyahu from left-wingers has been about what they say is an underlying anti-democratic political personality, and a moral slipperiness.

"From my point of view a leader is not a friend, he is an instrument of the state," Cohen said. "If I look at Netanyahu, Barak and Rami Milo, they are instruments whose purpose, from my vantage point, is to ensure that my life will be better."

"What type of person they are, as long as they are not criminals, doesn't matter to me," Cohen added. "What I care about is that they give results."

Despite abundant hiccups, Netanyahu—according to Cohen—has provided results for his constituents. "The man promised to stop Oslo, and to renegotiate things with the Palestinians," Cohen said. "And everyone knew that renegotiation could lead to a halting of the process. In that regard, he is doing everything he set out to do."

"Understand that there is no one who wants to see him fall more than I," he continued. "But I am the last person who will say he did not understand that he embarked on a process that would lead to yelling

and screaming and tension with the US. He knows what he is doing, and is doing it intentionally."

According to Cohen, Netanyahu has maneuvered himself into a win-win situation. "If he is now tough with the Arabs, and he is able to renegotiate Oslo at the price of some protests from the US and the Europeans, he will say 'See, I was right, we are able to get more in the negotiations.' But if the Arabs resume terrorism, he can also say, 'See, I was right, we can't make peace with them.'"

One man who thinks Netanyahu's approach will be vindicated is prominent conservative British historian Paul Johnson, the author of the critically acclaimed *Modern Times: The World from the Twenties to the Eighties* and *A History of the Jews*.

Johnson raised eyebrows last month when, in a *Wall Street Journal* opinion piece, he placed Netanyahu in the pantheon of Israel's great leaders, alongside David Ben-Gurion and Menachem Begin.

"I think he is doing a good job, but that his public relations are not good," said Johnson, in a phone interview from his home in England. "But what he actually does is right. I believe he is right in not taking any risks."

Johnson, who sprinkles his conversation with reminiscences of encounters he had with Ben-Gurion and Begin, said Netanyahu is playing it safe

with the Palestinians out of the fear that if he makes one serious mistake, "Israel has had it, and you will all be dead."

Johnson rejects the opposition's claim that not moving on Oslo constitutes a greater peril to Israel, since it will lead to an explosion with the Palestinians. "I don't think there is any real risk of war, unless Israel lowers its guard in a big way," Johnson said. "I don't think the Arabs are going to try something like that again."

"There is a risk of rioting and so on, but so what?" he added. "There has always been rioting in Palestine and Israel. It is some-

thing one has to put up with."

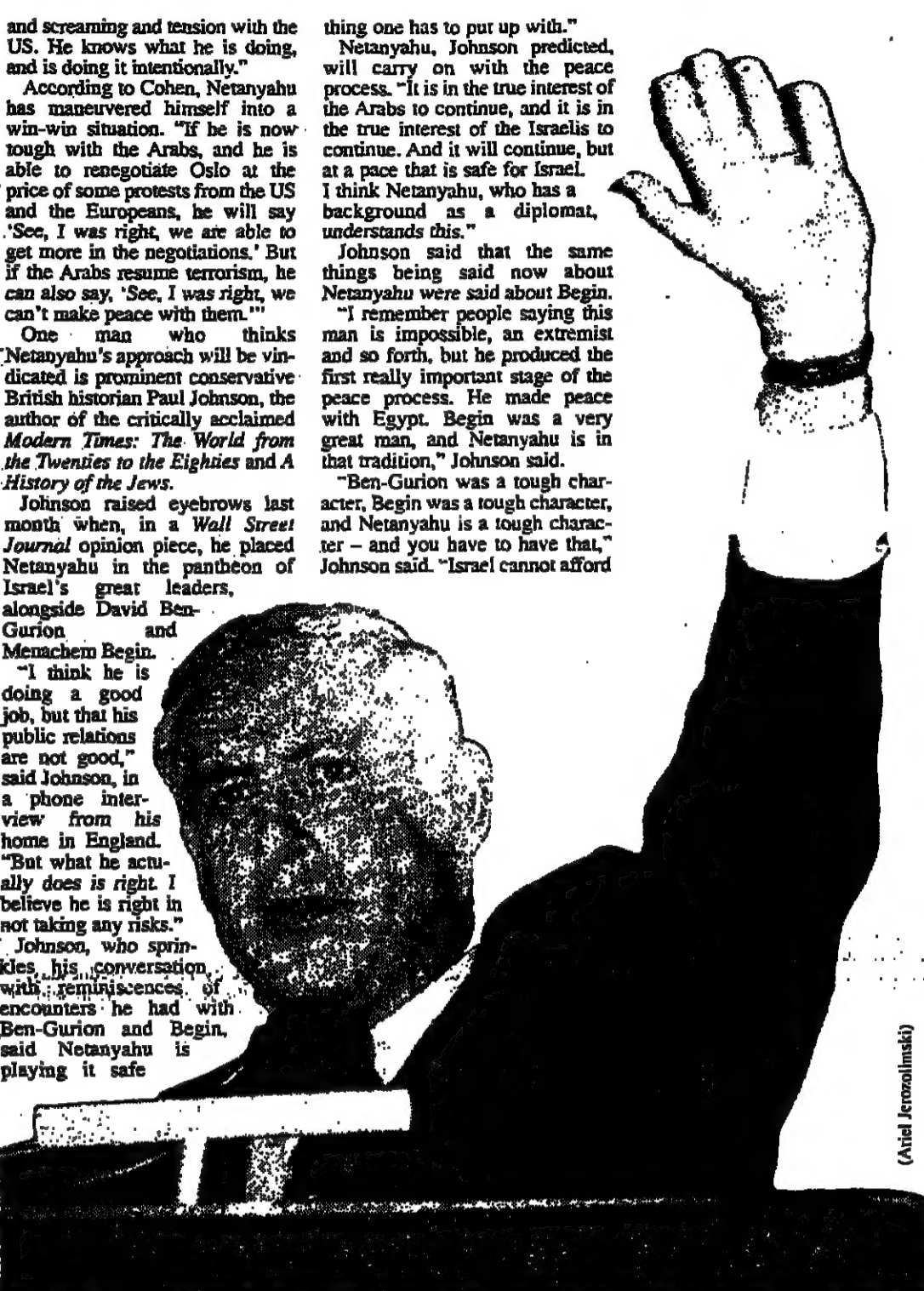
Netanyahu, Johnson predicted, will carry on with the peace process. "It is in the true interest of the Arabs to continue, and it is in the true interest of the Israelis to continue. And it will continue, but at a pace that is safe for Israel. I think Netanyahu, who has a background as a diplomat, understands this."

Johnson said that the same things being said now about Netanyahu were said about Begin. "I remember people saying this man is impossible, an extremist and so forth, but he produced the first really important stage of the peace process. He made peace with Egypt. Begin was a very great man, and Netanyahu is in that tradition," Johnson said.

"Ben-Gurion was a tough character, Begin was a tough character, and Netanyahu is a tough character—and you have to have that," Johnson said. "Israel cannot afford



A reluctant meeting with Arafat four months into Netanyahu's tenure



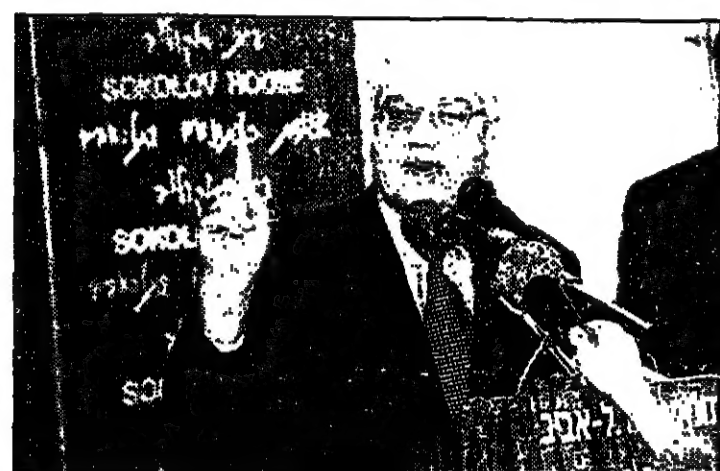
(Aviel Jernozinski)

Netanyahu
A mid-term report

Inside: • The PM's free market agenda
• The silence of the opposition



(Brian Tetterly)



(Efraim Kibnek)



(Brian Tetterly)

The first 24 months of the Netanyahu government have been punctuated by crises: (Clockwise from top left) Dan Meridor after being questioned by police about the Bar-On Affair; Benny Begin and David Levy resign from the government; IDF soldiers face off with demonstrators at Har Homa

impressive. But that is a delicate balancing act."

"Netanyahu is gambling," Tevet added, "but I don't think that he has the knowledge, or the vision that is necessary. Ben-Gurion gambled on the basis of a tremendous understanding of history and of political events. He really was a man who could see

the other side of the hill, very clearly and very accurately. That is how he proved his greatness."

"I don't think Bibi sees the other side of the hill. He hasn't proven that he gambles for big stakes. Until now he has not convinced me that it is a calculated risk that he is taking, just a risk," said Tevet.

The Begin-Sadat Center
for Strategic Studies

Bar-Ilan University

Democracies and their Armed Forces towards the 21st Century: Israel in Comparative Context

Research Workshop of the Israel Science Foundation

Monday, 8 June

- 9:00 a.m.-9:30 Greetings
9:30 Theoretical and Historical Perspectives
chair: Stuart Cohen (BESA)
Charles Moskos (Northwestern University USA), John Gooch (University of Leeds, UK), Asa Kasher (Tel-Aviv University)
11:30 Changes in Democratic Strategic Cultures
chair: Uzi Landau (Chairman, Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee)
Stephen Rosen (Harvard University, USA), Efraim Inbar (BESA), Moshe Lissak (Hebrew University), Uri Ben-Eliezer (Haifa University)
15:30 Confronting a New Environment
chair: Shmuel Sandler (BESA)
Reka Szemerényi (MTA, Hungary), David Bercuson (University of Calgary, Canada), Eyal Ben-Ari, Boaz Shamir, Efraim Elron (Hebrew University), Joel Rosenthal (Carnegie Council, USA)

Tuesday, 9 June

- 9:00 a.m. The Complex of Future Armed Forces
chair: Ya'akov Bar-Siman-Tov
(Leonard Davis Institute, Hebrew University)
Martin Van Creveld (Hebrew University), Fabrizio Battistelli (Archivio Disarmo, Italy), Theodore Stroup (Education Association of US Army, USA), Jürgen Kuhlmann (Germany)

11:30

- Supreme Command
chair: Ilan Greifsammer (Bar-Ilan University)
Bernard Boene (Université de Toulouse, France), Eva Elzoni-Halevy (Bar-Ilan University), Eliot Cohen (SAIS, USA)

Wednesday, 10 June

- 9:00 Sources of Intra-Institutional Tension
chair: Shai Feldman
(Jaffee Center, Tel-Aviv University)
Stuart Cohen (BESA), Steven David (Johns Hopkins University, USA), Ruth Linn (Haifa University), Warren Young (Bar-Ilan University)
11:30 Relations with Civil Society
chair: Gad Barzilai (Tel-Aviv University)
Baruch Kimmelman (Hebrew University), Yoram Peri (Hebrew University), Menachem Finkelstein (IDF), Ashok Kapur (University of Waterloo, Canada)
15:30 Future Agendas for Israel - Round Table
chair: Efraim Inbar (BESA)
Gabriel Ben-Dor (Haifa University), Yehuda Ben-Meir (Bar-Ilan University), Reuven Gal (Carnegie Institute), Daphna Izraeli (Bar-Ilan University)

Location: Beck Auditorium, Bar-Ilan University
For further details and invitations contact BESA: 03-5319999

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Samuel Rubin
Israel Academy of Music

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Bar-Ilan University

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Netanyahu's free-market agenda: A scorecard

Netanyahu A mid-term report

In his first speech after being elected prime minister two years ago, Binyamin Netanyahu sketched out his economic vision.

"We will finally introduce a truly free market in Israel. An economy which is not controlled by bureaucrats; an economy that does not stunt initiative."

"I am sure that in this way we will unleash our creativity, the genius laden in this people, so that the society and the economy will burst forth and take off, and will blossom and flourish."

Two years later considerable progress has been registered on the privatization and liberalization fronts and a "bursting forth" is certainly evident in the high-tech sector. But much of the rest of the economy remains dominated by the government and mired in an economic slowdown.

IF THE cutting edge of the global economy is information technology, then the cutting edge of the Information Age is the Internet. As early as September last year, a headline in the *New York Times* proclaimed, "Israel: Becoming Global Internet Powerhouse."

The article noted that Israeli companies CheckPoint and VocaTec are global leaders in the fields of network security and Internet telephony, while another Israeli company, VideoNet, is a major player in Internet video broadcasting.

"Israel has more start-ups in Internet technology than any place other than the Silicon Valley," Ed Zander, an executive at American computer giant Sun Microsystems, told the *Times*.

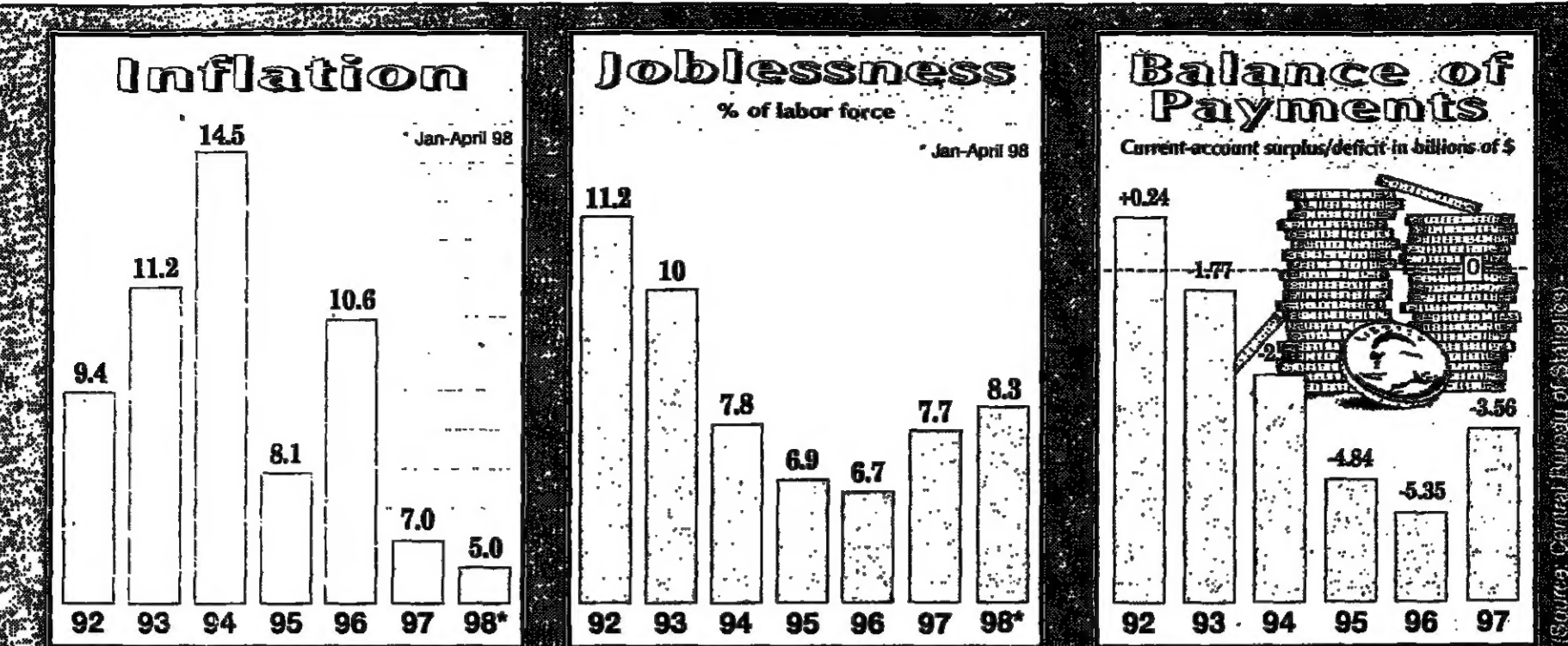
Even though Israel has twice as many engineers per capita as the U.S. many are still surprised that a country of only six million people has become a leader in such a competitive field.

But just as Israel excels at producing "plug-ins" – small Internet programs that attach to the two leviathans of the Internet world, Microsoft's Explorer and Netscape's Navigator – the high-tech economy seems to be a "plug-in" that is connected to, but distinct from, the general economy.

At \$5 billion, high-tech exports already comprise one quarter of Israel's overall exports. But as of 1996, according to the *Israel Yearbook*, the high-tech sector employed only about 40,000 people. Though that figure has presumably grown, there still is a drastic shortage of workers in the high-tech sector, while at the same time, the economy as a whole is suffering from 8.3 percent unemployment.

Considering that joblessness had

After his election Binyamin Netanyahu promised sweeping economic advances: On some fronts, especially privatization, he's made progress. But on others – reducing taxes and the size of government – he faces major obstacles. Saul Singer takes stock



reached a low of 5.9 percent in 1995 after peaking at 11.2% back in 1992, the current trend clearly challenges a right-wing coalition traditionally supported by blue-collar voters.

In economic terms, however, the state of the labor market reflects a historic transition.

Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel recently explained that traditional labor-intensive industries, from food packaging to textiles, are inevitably hurting because Israel cannot offer the low wages and large quantities of Third World competitors. The high-tech industry, meanwhile, makes the most of Israel's added value, namely its highly educated workforce.

Netanyahu has not been able to bridge the gap between the "two economies" as he had promised: between the high-tech economy which is flourishing and the low-tech which is languishing.

In 1997, GDP per capita dropped in comparison with the previous year for the first time since 1989. The slowdown has continued with a mere 1.3% growth in the first quarter of this year.

AND YET THE government's macro-economic record is far from poor. According to the Bank of Israel and most analysts, the economy was headed for a fall when Netanyahu took office, as the boost from the massive aliyah from the former Soviet Union had played itself out, and as the Rabin government's expansive fiscal policies generated an unaffordable \$5.9 billion current-account deficit.

Netanyahu, who together with

then-finance minister Dan Meridor cut the '97 budget by NIS 7.2b., is personally identified with the improvement in Israel's fiscal performance and the decline in inflation from double-digit levels just two years ago to the current 4-5% vicinity.

Although Netanyahu is not blamed directly for causing the slowdown, a vigorous debate rages over whether he has made it worse, changed course in the right direction, or changed course but not gone far enough.

Netanyahu's critics blame the continuation of the slowdown on the state of the peace process, which has directly hurt tourism and, they claim, confidence in the economy in general.

It is true that the great leap in foreign investment in Israel occurred as the peace process was moving forward most strongly, more than doubling from \$900m. in 1994 to \$2.3b. in 1995. But this increase continued at a healthy clip into 1996 – \$2.8b. – and even sped up a bit in 1997, when foreign investment hit a record \$3.7b.

A large share of this foreign investment figure can be attributed to the sale of a controlling share of Israel's largest bank, Bank Hapoalim, to the Arison group, which paid \$1.37b. for a 43% stake, with an option to buy another 21% based on the same value.

This was the largest privatization deal in Israel's history, helping the Netanyahu government surpass its own targets for privatization.

As Netanyahu crowed in an April interview to *Globe*, "Nobody

believed me when I said we would privatize in a volume of NIS 4b. We ended the year at more than twice that amount, at NIS 8b., and that is several times more than the previous government did."

In fact, Netanyahu is credited with moving considerably more vigorously on privatization than the previous government, though critics point out that many of these deals were in the works before Netanyahu took office.

Government Companies Authority director-general Tzipi Livni says one shouldn't pay too much attention to the face values of the privatized companies, but rather keep an eye on the range of companies the government is in the process of privatizing.

The privatization process, she says, is still accelerating, and the important thing is a determined policy that the government should not own any company it has no reason to own.

Just this month, Livni announced that another 20% of Bezeq will be sold on the New York Stock Exchange by next year, leaving the government with a less-than-40% share.

Still, some observers are skeptical about the government's ability to crack the tougher nuts, such as the Israel Electric Corporation and El Al. Others criticize the government for blindly focusing on privatization, regardless of whether it simply means transforming a state monopoly into a private one.

For example, by selling Bank Hapoalim before spinning off its provident and pension fund holdings, the government chose not to tackle the problem of over-concentration in the banking sector – and in fact, may have made it more difficult to solve, according



Netanyahu is proud of his inflation-fighting alliance with Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel. (Ariel Jerolimski)

to economist Daniel Doron. In general, capital-market reform seems not to be on the agenda at the moment, leading critics to charge the government with too narrow a focus.

ALONGSIDE his privatization record, Netanyahu is most proud of his alliance with Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel in the latter's push to bring down inflation.

Inflation made an abrupt turn from running at an annual rate of more than 12% in mid-1996 to an annual rate of 4.5% this year, well under the government's target of 7-10%. This has been accomplished mainly by Frenkel maintaining what some – like Manufacturers Association President Dan Propser – see as punishingly high interest rates, though these rates have been steadily reduced each month for the last five months.

Throughout this period of combating inflation, the opposition and industrialists have bitterly attacked

Frenkel and Netanyahu for "strangling the economy" with high interest rates. These critics say that the price paid for taming inflation has been billions of dollars in lost growth.

Netanyahu and Frenkel respond that inflation does not create economic growth; on the contrary, it generates instability that makes sustained growth almost impossible.

Tel Aviv's financial markets seem to agree with the government's approach.

After initially greeting Netanyahu's rise to power with a panicky flight from the bond market, it has subsequently changed course and is now routinely setting new records, while steadily attracting new foreign investors.

In currency trading, the shekel has defied a host of pessimists and emerged, so far, unscathed from the sweeping liberalization reform launched earlier this month.

The fears that speculation would cripple a fully convertible Israeli currency the way it has recently done to a host of Asian currencies have proved baseless. "Clearly," says Frenkel, "the markets have an

appreciation for our fiscal and monetary restraint."

THIS WEEK Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman claimed to see the light at the end of the tunnel, arguing "the economy is showing the first indicators of leaving the slowdown and of an economic turnaround." Among the more promising indicators, the Central Bureau of Statistics pointed this week to renewed growth in industrial production and an increase in the import of investment goods.

Some foreign analysts are also optimistic.

A recent report by Deutsche Morgan Grenfell concludes that "the economy looks set to begin its journey back towards trend growth, albeit slowly."

More surprisingly, the report argues that while the re-election of a Labor government might "raise confidence" in the political arena, such a change might risk "pressure on the shekel and foreign direct investment and lead to economic slippage on fiscal and monetary policy."

DESPITE AWARDING Netanyahu a grade of 6-7 out of 10 on the economic front, Hebrew University economist David Levhari said the government still has to prove itself in several areas. "What they haven't tackled is the fact that elements of the budget are still going to all sorts of interest groups and not benefiting the general economy; their general reform toward increasing competitiveness is progressing very slowly, and in privatization they're continuing to look for millionaires rather than selling to the entire nation."

But whatever grades the Netanyahu government might be given in comparison with its predecessor, there is also the question of whether Netanyahu will meet his own lofty goals.

Economist Yoram Gabai argues that Netanyahu has mainly been effective in areas where he can move without confronting his coalition – by backing Frenkel on inflation, privatization, and currency liberalization – but has not confronted more politically difficult tasks.

What remains on Netanyahu's free-market agenda – reducing the tax burden and the size of government, increasing competition, and shifting spending towards infrastructure and other growth-inducing investments – seems politically daunting, if not impossible. Neeman has been talking about a tax reform – one by which everyone, including wage earners, would submit tax reports – but not one that would reduce the overall tax burden.

The budget cuts to date have put a brake on government spending, but have not changed spending priorities. A long list of reforms to promote growth was released last August, but few have been acted upon.

As in the diplomatic arena, Netanyahu's economic agenda seems to be on a collision course with his own coalition. So far, the economic agenda has, from Netanyahu's perspective, been moving quietly forward. The luxury of quiet movement may be nearing its end, with the prospect of confrontation or capitulation looming ahead.

Dan Gerstenfeld and David Harris contributed to this article.

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'We will not forget; We will not forgive': Peace Now members demonstrate on the second anniversary of Rabin's assassination — one of the few themes that can fire up the peace camp. (Isaac Harari)

Silence of the 'lambs'

Netanyahu

A mid-term report

Never have so many Israeli peace demonstrators come out into the street as during the first two years of the Netanyahu era, according to Peace Now director-general Chen Raz. The protests have been larger and more frequent than even those that took place during the Lebanon War.

But while the Lebanon War protests led to a commission of inquiry, the ouster of Ariel Sharon as defense minister, and ultimately to a national unity government that ended the war, the anti-Netanyahu protests have led nowhere, said Raz.

"People on the Left are in despair because they see that even if 250,000 of them come out to Rabin Square, like they did last November 4 (the second anniversary of Yitzhak Rabin's murder), two days later it's forgotten about. They don't want to imitate the right-wing's protests against Rabin, with all the violence and incitement, but they see it's gotten to the point that the only way to get people's attention in this country is with violence, and this has made them [feel] deeply alienated," Raz said.

Despite all its hatred, antagonism, disgust — whatever the appropriate word — for Netanyahu, and its conviction that the prime minister is leading the country over a cliff, the left-wing opposition doesn't seem able to lay a glove on him. Its demonstrations are flat, with little emotional charge. The exceptions are the protests marking Rabin's assassination — the only theme that seems to be able to fire up the peace camp — and those that followed the bloody Hasmonean Tunnel riots in September 1996.

Macabre as it may sound, blood is the element missing from the peace campaign, say activists.

Raz said that the peace camp is stuck in a kind of catch-22: It wants to mount protests to prevent the peace process from degenerating into violence, but such protests cannot be effective until after violence begins. "But by that time, it will be too late to stop the bloodshed — the violence by Palestinians and Israeli extremists," he said.

That's the way it was with protests during the Lebanon War and the intifada, and that's the way it will be with Netanyahu's handling of the Oslo Accords, say dovish activists and politicians.

They foresee a cycle of Palestinian and Israeli violence, and feel helpless to prevent it. "Evidently the Israeli people don't learn the easy way, only the hard way. Now it's a matter of waiting for the other shoe to drop, but when it does, it's going to drop very hard," said Meretz leader Yossi Sarid.

Yuval Rabin, son of Yitzhak Rabin and head of Dor Shalom, compared the current public mood to the way it was on the eve of the Yom Kippur War.

Why, despite its disgust with the government, does the opposition come across as anemic, ineffective? Larry Dorfner talks to peace activists, who censure Labor's Ehud Barak for his tame leadership

"The slogan then was, 'We've never had it so good,' and people today have the same sort of short-term vision. They look around and think, 'Everything's rosy. There's hardly any terror. The economic recession isn't a catastrophe,' and we'll recover sooner or later. The US may be making threats, but they're not going to impose any sanctions. At worst, a few

Raz said. With the lull in terror, he added, it's easy for the public to believe that Netanyahu is succeeding. They've become complacent, and indifferent to voices of protest.

Meanwhile, the peace camp has no leadership to challenge the prime minister, or to lead the fight for Israeli hearts and minds, say those on the Left.

"Nobody has come along to take the place of Rabin and [Shimon] Peres," said Raz.

"Neither the leader of the opposition, nor any other personality or political body is leading the struggle in a well-defined way, or offering a clear, determined alternative," said Rabin.

Ultimately, they said, the blame lies chiefly with the putative leader of the opposition, Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak (see box). His policies are vague; he feints more to the Right than to the Left, and he hasn't managed to inspire anyone.

"What is his program for moving the peace process forward? What is his program for concluding the peace process? I would expect that Barak, as a candidate for prime minister, would be giving clear, unambiguous statements on these issues," said Rabin.

Many of Barak's critics point to his recent visit to the ideological settlement of Beit El, founded by Gush Emunim, where he pledged to keep Beit El and the nearby settlement of Ofra under permanent Israeli sovereignty, as evidence of his failure as leader of the peace camp.

"Barak thinks he has the Left in his pocket, so he reaches out to the center and the Right," said Raz.

"Maybe this is a good strategy to get elected, I don't know, but what I do know is that his strategy has left the peace camp without a leader."

Barak already has 50 percent of the people behind him, so he should be firing them up, giving them a reason to lift him onto their shoulders, before he goes after other voters," said Sarid. (In the

"Barak thinks he has the Left in his pocket, so he reaches out to the center and the Right. Maybe this is a good strategy to get elected, but it has left the peace camp without a leader"

Chen Raz, Peace Now

last two months, in fact, Barak has lost his lead in the polls over Netanyahu, and trails the prime minister by as much as 7%.)

All this leaves the peace camp in a bind — there is no effective opposition in the Knesset or in the streets. New ideas, born out of disillusionment, are in order, activists feel.

"The conventional methods have failed. Another few hundred

thousand people in Rabin Square evidently won't make the change," said Rabin.

Dor Shalom's answer, he said, is "to try to shift the balance of political forces in Israel" — to attract the traditionally right-wing sectors of the population to the Left.

To that end, Dor Shalom activists have been running educational programs in urban slums and development towns, where the Right typically grabs about 75% of the vote. There is no overt political message in these efforts, but the organization hopes to break down the suspicion and hostility between poor people and "peaceniks," which, it believes, could also break the right-wing's hold on the lower classes.

Peace Now has a different tactic in mind, Raz said — "civil disobedience." This method was last seen in action on Wednesday in the Moslem Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City, where some 50 Peace Now activists protested Aseret Cohanim's abortive attempt to put up makeshift homes for nine new Jewish families. "We cut their electrical cable," Raz said, adding that one Peace Now demonstrator was arrested and released after a few hours.

Over the Pessah holiday, 31 Peace Now members were arrested — and likewise released within hours — in protest against the Hebron settlement's staging of jubilee festivities-cum-political demonstrations with state funds, Raz continued. "We blocked the Etzion Junction [on the way to Hebron] for three hours," he noted with satisfaction.

"There are a few hundred people who are ready to do things like this," he continued. These activists are committed to non-violence, he stressed. But they're convinced they must do something more forceful than chant, "Bibi go home," if they want the peace camp's message to start resonating again, instead of fading out as it's been doing for the last two years.



'No Labor leader has taken such clear-cut stands as I have.' (Ariel Jerolimski)

Barak talks back

About the only member of the left-wing opposition who sounds optimistic these days is its leader, Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak.

Pessimism itself is the problem, the only problem, he insisted in a telephone interview. "The 'street' is not dead, it's that our people keep saying it's dead, so the media write it up that way," he said.

Wherever he goes, he says, especially to the development towns, he finds discontent brewing with Netanyahu's policies.

Barak denies every criticism leveled against him. He even denies that he's trailing

Netanyahu in popularity, insisting that he's running about even, which is pretty good, he says, considering that Israel is just coming out of its jubilee celebrations, "which Netanyahu tried to turn into his own personal event."

What about the charges that he is vague? "In my opinion, there has never been a Labor Party leader who has taken such clear-cut stands as I have. Did any of them say that haredim should be drafted into the army? I've come out against the conversion law, I've spoken in favor of compromise on the Golan Heights in return for peace, and the same with the Palestinians."

But when asked his position on the issue of the day — the US plan for a 13 percent Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, a plan Netanyahu has rejected — Barak replies: "It wouldn't be right for me to interfere with the prime minister in his negotiations. Besides, if I say we should give up 13% and Arafat agrees to accept 12%, it leaves me in an idiotic position. What I say is that Netanyahu should reach an agreement as soon as possible on the second redeployment."

Claims that he is hiding his true political nature out of electoral considerations — keeping his distance from the Left while cozying up to the Right — are unjustified, Barak maintains. "I am acting on my true convictions, which I held even before I entered politics. It's no secret that I am in the right-wing, of center, of my party. I have a strong, deep attachment to the Land of Israel, yet I also have a strong aversion to ruling over a foreign people."

About his recent, controversial visit to Beit El, where he pledged that the settlement and its neighbor, Ofra, would remain

under permanent Israeli sovereignty, Barak notes, "I also told them that I'm not sure we'll be able to remain in all the settlements."

Asked why he hasn't led a furious battle against Netanyahu, as Netanyahu did when he headed the opposition, Barak replies: "You can't fight all-out all the time. The timing has to be right. If we organized one mass demonstration after another, and by the third time we got 10% of the crowd we had the first time, and people saw that despite all this the government was still standing, where would that get us?"

But now, he declares, is the time to go all-out. The peace process is on the verge of collapse, the Clinton administration is threatening to wash its hands of the affair, and the Palestinians are getting near the breaking point, he says. The opposition is going back into the streets and cranking up the volume.

It will target not only Netanyahu, but also his ministers, who "know the truth," Barak contends, singling out Natan Sharansky, Yitzhak Mordechai and Avigdor Kahalani — those, he says, "who privately oppose Netanyahu's policies but publicly support them."

"The moment of truth has arrived, and Netanyahu and his government must be held accountable," Barak continues. "We're going to expose the fraud Netanyahu has perpetrated on the entire country. We're going to pull his mask off."

A full-blown national crisis is near, he continues. "Whether it's an American withdrawal from the peace process, or a sharp economic downturn, or God forbid, a surge in terror, I'm sure it's going to come."

For this reason, Barak believes there will be new elections within the next year. Talk that he is considering going into a national unity government are just "false rumors," he says, adding, "For now, it's not on the agenda."

False rumors and distortions fed by political operatives — he won't say who — and eaten up by a ravenous media have followed him for a long time, he says. "First they called me a 'Napoleon,' an 'autocrat,' and now the bon mot is to say that I've lost my confidence," he notes. "Both images are false. I'm a person of quiet confidence. Unless it was necessary, I wouldn't kill a fly."

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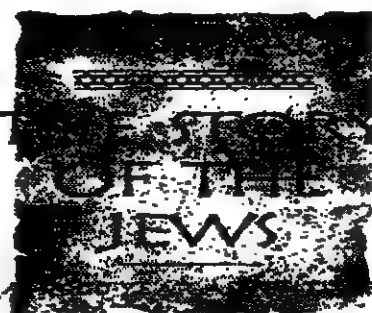
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Rallying together for a good cause

Geared up for a truly moving adventure, 27 vintage car enthusiasts drove their prized vehicles across Europe to celebrate the jubilee and help fund a reservoir in the Negev. **Bonnie Rochman reports**

Eduard Sternfeld was looking forward to driving from London to Jerusalem in his company's Lamborghini Diablo. Almost three weeks have passed since Sternfeld, a participant in the international JNF-Soda Club London-Israel Car Rally designed to raise money for Israel, set out from Soda Club's Swiss distribution center en route to London in the blue and white race car.

It was in France that the temperamental car - Sternfeld prefers the term "sensitive" - decided it would go no further. Then the contingency plan kicked in: Sternfeld rented a 1988 Porsche Carrera, original series, for \$10,000.

"It was a last-minute resort," said Sternfeld, the international director of the rally's sponsoring company Soda Club and a native of Belgium who has lived here for five years.

"There was no way I was not going to make the trip. It's important for Israel to get into the news not only for political reasons," he said.

The 27 cars, which range from a 1928 Model A Ford to modern racers, made the 5,000km journey from London to Jerusalem in two weeks. Most of the cars are piloted by their owners, upper-crust Jewish automobile enthusiasts who jumped at the chance to combine their hobby with Israel's 50th birthday celebrations.

The oldest driver is 81-year-old Hilary Cline in a 1975 blue Jaguar convertible. The retired businessman shrugs off attention over his age. "I'm adventurous. I like a challenge," he said. "I want to do it, I can do it, so I do it."

Another driver is a non-Jewish chauffeur who petitioned companies to sponsor him and a friend in what is arguably the rally's most pedestrian car - a four-wheel drive.

But regardless of their divergent personal backgrounds, the drivers and their companions have bonded into a tightly knit group of buddies with a love of shared adventures.

They left London on May 10 - drivers (each with at least one accompanying passenger) from Europe, the US, Australia and South Africa - and ferried to France. From there they wound their way through Switzerland, Monte Carlo (where they leisurely drove the Grand Prix circuit) and Italy, sailed to Greece, drove to Athens and boarded another boat, via Cyprus, for the trip to Haifa.

They arrived at the port on May 24.

"It was very emotional coming into Haifa," said Iris Sobol, a

Swiss passenger in a gray Jaguar convertible. "We woke up as the sun was rising and saw Haifa in the distance. It brought to mind memories of the Exodus and how those people must have felt when they caught their first glimpse of Israel."

"Cloud 9" reads the license plate on the 1964 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud III that Londonites Eva and Dennis Shore drove to Jerusalem. "Stop and think about how many Jews arrived in Haifa from DP camps in Cyprus," said Eva Shore, an interior designer. "Okay, we did it in a helluva lot more luxury, but it was still very moving."

Fortunately for the participants, the rally's organizers had the foresight to invite an escort from the Royal Auto Club, the British equivalent of MEMSI or the AAA. The two mechanics kept busy.

First the Model A Ford broke down. RAC fixed it up. Then the 1952 Alvis's exhaust pipe ignited its wooden floorboards. A fire extinguisher took care of that.

When the gearbox of the red-roofed 1967 Morris Minor 1000



convertible failed in Italy, a police car escorted the Minor, which was being towed by the RAC truck, through the frenetic Italian traffic. Then the already ailing convertible suffered another hit - this time by the police escort, which rear-ended it and dented the bumper.

"The four cops got out and examined the front of their car and promptly drove off," said David Jacob, the Minor's owner. Jacob had decided to join the rally after his younger daughter, who works for the British Olim Society, showed him a video of a similar car rally that took place a year and a half ago.

"She said, 'Dad, you've got to do this to celebrate Israel's 50th.' It's also the Minor's 50th birthday, so it all tied together very nicely," said Jacob, who works in real

estate in England.

In their 1962 white Thunderbird, Gene and Maria Epstein formed one of the few husband-wife teams on the journey. Gene Epstein, a car dealer for 35 years, turned his profession into a hobby. Now retired, he and his wife maintain their collection of 24 vintage cars at their farm in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. They'd crisscrossed the US and Canada as participants in various car tours, but had never visited Israel.

"When this car tour came up, linking old cars with Jerusalem, we no longer had an excuse not to come," said Gene Epstein, 59. "It's been wonderful, great camaraderie. With all these people sharing a common interest, you almost feel like it's a pilgrimage."

Chris Underwood drives for a living, so undertaking a two-week

(Top) Gleaming vintage and newer luxury cars glide along an Israeli road; (right) A future driver poses with the 1928 Model A Ford; (left) Rally cars form a jubilee 50 and their drivers at Jerusalem's City Hall yesterday

car trip doesn't exactly qualify as time off. Nonetheless, the 45-year-old chauffeur from London took a vacation from work to join the tour. "I read an article in *The Times* about three rallies - to Jerusalem, St. Petersburg and Capetown," he said. "Capetown is too far, St. Petersburg was canceled, so Jerusalem it was." He hasn't been disappointed. Israel is "a beautiful, brilliant, Christian who is here for the first time."

But the rally isn't only about fun. The drivers of each car raised or put up more than \$13,000 per vehicle to participate in the rally. Some of these funds, plus donations from the sponsoring Jewish National Fund and Israeli manufacturer of carbonated water, Soda Club, will go toward the construction of a water reservoir in the Negev.

About \$100,000 will be donated to aid in the construction of the Besor reservoir in the western Negev. Billed as the largest reservoir in the Middle East, it will hold 4 million cubic meters of



recycled water transported by pipeline from Gush Dan, said JNF spokesman Moshe Pearl.

Israel, with its narrow roads and dearth of expansive thoroughfares, is a country traversed largely by small cars. Take into consideration the heavy taxes that are levied on even the least expensive cars and it becomes even clearer why small,

simple cars are so ubiquitous on Israeli roads.

So it stands to reason that Wednesday's lineup of the gleaming vintage cars and newer luxury automobiles in the courtyard of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem attracted attention.

Afik Avraham was one of those who stopped to admire the autos.

The 68-year-old retiree inspected the Shores's Rolls Royce, peering inside at the plush gray back seat that could easily seat four people. "This is pure pleasure, seeing these cars. There are hardly any in Israel," he said.

"It's great that they came all the way here. I wouldn't do it, but good for them."

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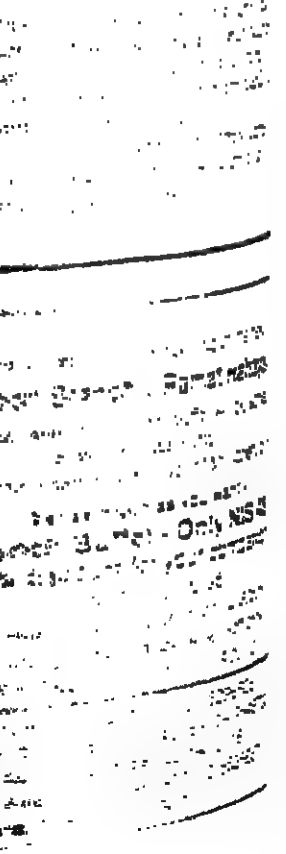
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Friday,
May 29, 1998

BUSINESS & FINANCE

13

MARKETS

in brief

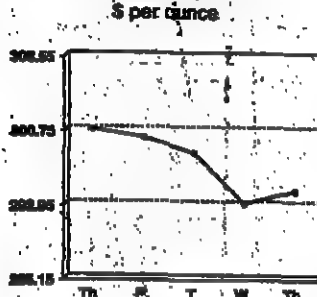
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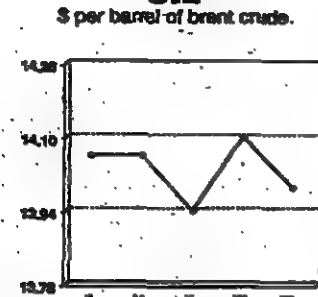
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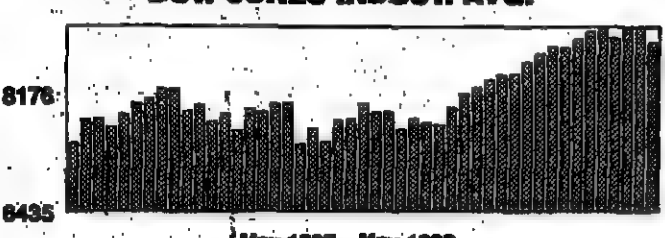
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BIT & BYTES

Israel, California sign R&D agreement

Israeli and California officials signed a research and development agreement between Israel and the State of California on Wednesday. California Governor Pete Wilson presided over the signing.

The agreement will encourage joint R&D and strategic cooperation, and calls for the exchange of technology, ideas, and talent between California and Israeli-based companies as well as the cooperative use of new business and investment opportunities. The pact also calls for a joint technology summit to be held in the future.

The signing took place in the framework of the Tech Ventures high-tech conference held this week in Santa Clara, where US investors met with over 130 high-tech companies from Israel.

Sharamsky also met with the new president of Intel, Craig Barrett, who said Intel would continue to boost its activities in Israel, where the company conducts some 20% of its R&D activities.

Hewlett-Packard buys local company

The Hewlett-Packard Company and the MARS Information Product Group, Ltd., signed an agreement this week for HP to acquire CMS (Computing and Measurement Systems), a MARS subsidiary presently distributing and servicing HP's computer systems and test-and-measurement products in Israel, for \$19 million.

The Herzliya-based CMS will become a wholly owned subsidiary of Hewlett-Packard Europe and will restructure all the elements of the subsidiary's computing-business operations and test-and-measurement group servicing the Israeli market, including the existing HP marketing office.

MARS will continue to cooperate with HP in a number of fields, including the distribution and support of computer products and peripherals. The transaction will involve the transfer to HP of approximately 150 employees presently working for CMS.

MARS Information Product Group, Ltd., is an Israeli holding company, held 50 percent by The Israel Corporation.

Ambient Corp., Ordicard to merge

Ambient Corporation, a developer of smart card technology, and Ordicard, Israel's largest manufacturer of plastic ID and bank cards, announced this week that they are to merge the two companies in an equal partnership under the Ambient name. The company said it would be seeking equity as part of its plan to significantly expand operations.

At present, Ordicard has a production capacity of 60 million cards per year, including 10 million smart cards. Ambient develops technology for smart cards and for smart card systems, including the company's patent-pending, contactless, close-proximity smart cards. Ambient, established two years ago in Jerusalem's Technology Park in Malha, went public a few months ago.

Ordicard's headquarters and manufacturing facilities are in Caesarea. Eli Garber, president of Ordicard, will take over as president of the merged Ambient Corporation, while Jacob Davidson, presently CEO of Ambient, will become chairman of the board.

Ordicard is 25% owned by American Banknote, a major world manufacturer of security printing, including passports, national currencies and travelers checks.

Indigo launches plastic card press

Indigo, the leading company in digital color printing, has announced the beginning of sales of its new digital printing machine for plastic cards, the Ominus CardPress, after a number of companies have successfully tested the product.

The product is the only digital color printer in the plastic card business, and allows for the production of a small quantity up to tens of thousands of cards. It can print personal information on cards from an electronic data base, at a speed of up to 21,000 cards an hour on one side.

Indigo Israel CEO Rafi Maor said he believes the plastic card printing business is at the beginning of a transition to digitalization and noted that the plastic card printing business is worth billions of dollars a year.

Indigo is based in Holland but has its main subsidiary in Ness Ziona, where it also has its R&D and production facilities.

RESULTS

The Israel Electric Corporation yesterday reported a net loss of NIS 21 million in the first quarter, compared to an NIS 183m. profit in the same period last year. The company said the change in fortune was due to an appreciation of the dollar, lower tariffs, and large-scale investments.

A 1.7 percent real terms depreciation of the shekel against the dollar in the first three months of the year led to increased spending, according to a company statement. Expenditures reached NIS 310m. between January and March, as against NIS 42m. last year. Additionally, electricity bills became 3.5% cheaper in real terms, further eroding company profits.

During the first quarter the corporation spent NIS 30m. on linking homes to the electricity grid. While the company wanted this figure to be listed within the investment section of its accounts, the Public Utilities Authority - Electricity demanded that it be included as a loss - part of an ongoing dispute over this particular element of company spending.

The board said the loss came despite savings of 6% during the first quarter and after economies totaling 7% throughout 1997.

The Bank Hapoalim Group reported a 16% drop in net profits

IEC plunges NIS 21m. into red

Hapoalim net down 16%; Leumi up 21%

in the first quarter of the year, to NIS 277m. from NIS 330m. a year earlier.

The bank said the decline was due to a drop in profits from financing activities before provision for doubtful debts, an increase in operating and other expenses, costs of an early retirement program and drop in the bank's share of net profits from affiliated companies. These losses were offset by

a reduction in the provision for taxes due to the fall in profits, an increase in operating and other income and a decrease in provisions for doubtful debts.

Operating and other expenses were up 13.3% to NIS 1,017b., including \$11m. for the early retirement program and a rise in salaries of 9.5%.

In the second quarter, the bank is expected to record a pre-tax profit

of \$19.7m. from its sale of its entire holdings in Delek in March, under a law according to which it must reduce its holdings in non-banking corporations to 20% by December 31, 1999.

Bank Leumi's net profit in the first quarter was NIS 205.3m., an increase of 21.4% after excluding one-time capital gains last year from the sale of the bank's hold-

ings in Africa-Israel and in Leumi Insurance Holdings, which resulted in first quarter net profits of NIS 476.1m. in 1997.

The bank said its results were negatively affected by the sale of non-banking operations, an increase in operating expenses, including NIS 42m. for a voluntary retirement program and year 2000 computer conversion costs. However, this was offset by a drop of NIS 112.9m. in provisions for doubtful debts, growth in credit to the public and deposits and an increase in operating and other income.

The Israel Corporation, controlled by the Eisenberg family, ended the first quarter with profits of NIS 78.6m. compared with a loss of NIS 37.4m. mostly due to an improvement in profitability in Israel Chemicals and a decline in losses of Zim and the Israel Oil Refineries, in addition to NIS 107m. in capital gains from the share sales.

The group has holdings in chemicals and energy, shipping, real estate, high-tech, capitals markets, trade and services. Revenues of the group totaled NIS 4.9 billion in the first quarter, compared with NIS 5.1b. in the same quarter last year.

The IDB Holding Corp. had a 25% increase in net profits to NIS 60m. compared with NIS 47.9m.

Migdal, the country's largest insurance group, experienced a 75% percent drop in net profits to NIS 15.4m. from NIS 63.7m. a year earlier. The company attributed the decline to a drop in profits from investments and in losses from car insurance.

Who writes the bill?

BACKGROUND

By DAVID HARRIS

While Israel Electric Corporation (IEC) blames much of its poor first-quarter performance on the appreciation of the dollar, its key grievance remains a factor not referred to in the results statement issued to the media.

The company does, however, hint strongly that its performance is being hampered by the activities of its pricing watchdog - the Public Utilities Authority - Electricity (PUA-E).

Established under the Labor government but only operational over the last two years, the PUA-E is responsible for ensuring the tariffs set by IEC are fair to both the company and the consumers.

IEC said in its statement that rates fell some 3.5 percent, from an average of 26.24 agorot per kilowatt hour this time last year, to 25.32 agorot.

This drop in prices was the direct result of intervention by the PUA-E.

The organization took into account the various component costs of electricity production, including the drop in price of raw materials, and rejected the company's request for an 11% increase in the rates.

IEC appealed to the courts, but the judiciary sided with the PUA-E, leaving company executives warning that results would be affected. Both sides admit they don't always see eye-to-eye, but for the most part cooperate.

The workers' relationship with

the utilities authority, however, is a completely different story.

Since the company's creation 75 years ago, its workers have enjoyed many well-reported perks, including unlimited free electricity. Now the PUA-E, while lacking the legal ability to challenge the workers' standing, clearly frowns on their privileges and power.

The workers, led by Yoram Oberkovitz, have in recent months cut off all contacts with the PUA-E, making its job more complicated as it needs help from staff in obtaining financial data.

At the start of this month, IEC general manager Rafi Peled told the Knesset Economics Committee he will push for renewed dialogue between the two sides, but the stand-off remains in force.

Amdocs Ltd. files for \$253m. IPO

WASHINGTON (Bloomberg) - Amdocs, Ltd., a provider of billing and customer support software to telecommunications companies, will seek to raise about \$253 million through an initial public offering.

The company, based in the Island of Guernsey in the Channel Islands, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission to sell 18 million ordinary shares at \$14 to \$16 each. The price range is based on a valuation of \$253 million, based on a total of 156.8 million shares outstanding after the IPO.

Amdocs develops two types of software, including programs for customer care and billing, and a separate software line for publishing directories. The billing and customer care software gen-

erated about 55.9 percent of revenue for the six months ended March 31, 1998, and directory sales and publishing systems accounted for 44.1 percent.

The company markets its billing and customer care software to long-distance and local telephone companies as well as wireless businesses, such as providers of cellular and personal communications services. The software, manufactured in modules that can be pieced together into a complete package, help telephone companies in areas such as handling service orders, scheduling installations, invoicing, and detecting fraudulent calls.

While based in Guernsey, the company has operations in St. Louis, Israel, the UK, Australia, and Cyprus. The company's Israeli subsidiary employs more

than 1,800 software and information specialists and operates Amdocs's largest development center.

Net income totaled \$12.9 million for the six months ended March 31, down from \$16.8 million during the same period one year earlier. Revenue climbed to \$180.6 million from \$125.0 million.

Amdocs expects the IPO to raise about \$253 million after expenses if the shares sell for \$15 each. The company will use the money to repay \$183.8 million of bank debt and \$69.2 million of subordinated debt.

Underwriters for the stock sale will include Goldman, Sachs & Co. and Morgan Stanley Dean Witter. Amdocs will seek to have its shares traded on the New York Stock Exchange.

C&W to increase Bezeq stake to 12.75%

By JERUSALEM POST STAFF and news agencies

UK-based Cable & Wireless announced yesterday that it will increase its stake in Bezeq from 10.2 percent to 12.75% at a cost of NIS 228 million.

In accordance with an agreement approved by Communications Minister Limor Livnat, the company has also received permission to raise its holding to 20% after August 1999. Cable will purchase the 2.55% of shares from Merrill Lynch at some NIS 12 per share.

The company also holds July 1998 convertible warrants, which, once exercised, will bring the firm's stake up to 13%.

"Our further investment in Bezeq reflects our commitment to the company and our confidence in its future role in the telecommunications of the region," said company CEO Richard Brown. "We believe economic growth and integration will accelerate over time, making it one of the growth markets of the next century."

Meanwhile, Cable said it will buy MCI Communications Corp.'s Internet network and service business for \$625m. in cash, after regulators forced WorldCom Inc. to sell the units in order to buy MCI.

The move is expected to win WorldCom approval for its \$41.8 billion acquisition of MCI.

Cable's acquisition of MCI's Internet business will dramatically improve its position in the market for international Internet traffic, the fastest growing segment of the telecommunications industry. It

also gives it a significant position in the US market, something it has lacked until now.

"The Internet is a vital element of

our growth engine," said Brown. "It gives us the scale and scope we need in the US to match our leading role in the rest of the world."

"Why didn't I take your advice and buy into this fund two months ago?"

asked Mr. M.F. (name withheld by request) wistfully as George Warszawski, CommStock's director of international funds, processed his purchase of shares in the European Warrant Fund.

Since George first recommended the fund in January, it has shown more than 118.9% growth - and it's still rising! In fact, the European Warrant Fund, based on surging corporate growth in Europe, has returned more than 1337% profit over the past five years. Like most high-yield investments, this fund is accompanied by risk - but its fluidity allows you to withdraw at any time. The fund is ranked among top funds by financial journals including *Micropal*.

If you can consider investing a minimum of \$10,000 in this outstanding opportunity, please call George Warszawski at (02) 6244963 for a consultation with no obligation.

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Bidding to open for \$400m. Teheran-Caspian pipeline

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Iran, fighting US efforts to block Caspian oil transfers through its territory, will next week issue a tender for a \$400 million pipeline connecting the sea to Teheran, the Iranian news agency IRNA said on Wednesday.

The tender will be announced in London next week for foreign firms, the agency said about the project to build the 392-km oil pipeline from Iran's Caspian Sea port of Neka to Teheran.

It quoted Deputy Oil Minister Ali Majidi as saying the pipeline is expected to be completed in two

years and paid off in five years from the sale of oil obtained in swap deals.

A senior official with the National Iranian Oil Co said in an interview published on Sunday that the pipeline tender would be announced at a seminar in London on July 1-3.

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START-UP INVESTORS FORUM

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The meeting will include presentations by young companies seeking investments

For additional details call MATI Hi-Tech, Tel. 09-760 2716 (Shai)

The meeting will be held under the auspices of the Union Bank, the Union Capital Markets and Investment Co. Ltd., Migdal Insurance, Israel Export Institute, and Dr. Mark Friedman Ltd., Patent Attorneys.

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TASE stocks mixed as traders watch Asia

Tel Aviv

Israeli stocks were mixed, losing ground late in the day as traders expressed concern that Asia's economic slowdown will discourage investment in stocks worldwide, including Israeli stocks trading in the US as well as Tel Aviv.

Nice Systems Ltd., a maker of fax and voice archiving systems with American depository receipts trading in New York, lost 2.8 percent to 138.5 shekels.

The Maof Index of 25 large companies slipped 0.44% to 341.82, while the Tel Aviv-100 index shed 0.08% to 326.82.

Yesterday, US stocks fell for a fourth day amid concern Asia's economic crisis is hurting US businesses. Today, the Indonesian rupiah fell amid reports of rioting in Sumatra, and other Asian currencies fell.

"We still fear there will be more bad developments" in Asia, said Ron Weisberg, an international trader at Israel Brokerage and Investments. "Volatility in the Far East markets may drift to New York."

Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd., which also lists ADRs in the US, lost 1.2% to 149.7. Israel's largest drugmaker said yesterday it agreed to pay \$87 million for the

generic drugs unit of OPG Groep NV to expand sales in Europe, where the market for its own generic drugs is seen as having growth potential.

Across the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, 414.8 million shekels (\$113.8 million) of shares were traded, 10% more than the month's average. In the broader market, about three issues gained for every two that dropped.

Bank Hapoalim Ltd., Israel's largest bank by assets, added 0.2% to 11.23 shekels, and Bank Leumi Le-Israel Ltd. gained 0.3% to 7.38 shekels.

Bank Hapoalim said first-quarter profit dropped 16% on declining loan activity while Bank Leumi said earnings for the quarter rose 19.8% compared with the same quarter of 1997 year, excluding a one-time gain last year, as it lowered provisions on bad loans.

Bank earnings were "in the middle of expectations," Weisberg said.

Europe

The UK's FTSE 100 index finished flat yesterday, having spent most of the session tracking movements on Wall Street.

By the close, the benchmark index had dropped just 7.9 points to 5,862.3, having been as low as



Maof 341.82 ▼ 0.44%

Dow Jones 8970 ▲ 0.38%

FTSE 5862.3 ▼ 0.013%

Nikkei 15796.55 ▲ 0.84%

5,816.5 soon after New York trading began.

This market has no direction of its own," said a sales trader at a European brokerage.

"It's a bit nervy with some people worrying about a possible correction on Wall Street. So it has spent the day following the Dow."

Asia

Japan's benchmark stock index rose after tumbling yesterday, led by exporters such as Pioneer Electronic Corp. as a late rally by US stocks lessened concern profit growth may be slowing in the

world's largest economy. "Wall Street's resilience gave the market a psychological boost," said Minoru Tada, a managing director at World Securities Co. "Once the specter of a global stock decline was dispelled, the blue chips looked a bit oversold." The benchmark Nikkei 225 stock index rose 132.26 points, or 0.84 percent, to 15,796.55.

The broader Topix index of all shares on the first section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange gained 1.39 points, or 0.11% to 1223.73.

Pioneer Electronic Corp. rose 110 yen to 2,630, Fuji Photo Film Co. gained 80 yen to 4,740 and Bridgestone Corp. jumped 60 yen to 3,180 after the benchmark US stock index rebounded from its worst fall in three months — a stumble which dragged down markets around Asia.

Stocks also got a lift from the yen, as gains by the Japanese currency against the dollar eased fears foreign investors would sell to avoid exchange-rate losses.

"The yen's bounce provided reassurance that foreigners wouldn't pull out — and that other Asian currencies wouldn't be pulled down," said Tomohiko Yohena, a deputy manager at Izumi Securities Co. The yen, recently quoted at 137.26 to the dollar, climbed as high as 136.80 in morning trading. (Bloomberg)

Wall Street

Stocks rose modestly yesterday, extending a powerful Wall Street rebound that helped steady markets around the world after a steep selloff on Wednesday.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 33.63 — or 0.38 percent — to 8,970.20 after swinging from an early 35-point deficit to a 56-point gain that put the blue-chip barometer within 7 points of 9,000.

Most broad-market indexes also recovered from an early stumble as trading eased from Wednesday's hectic pace, resuming the sluggish tempo of the past month.

With investors again focusing on Asia, there was little reaction to new signs of the US economy's surprising resilience amid the weakening business conditions abroad.

The Commerce Department reported that the US economy expanded at a rapid 4.8% annual rate in the January-March period, up from last month's estimate of 4.2%.

The Standard and Poor's 500 rose 5.36 to 1,097.59, and the technology-heavy Nasdaq composite index rose 13.52 to 1,794.62.

Advancing issues outnumbered decliners by a 9-to-5 margin on the New York Stock Exchange, with 1,934 up, 1,069 down and 512 unchanged. (AP)

Dollar gains following Pakistan N-test

NEW YORK — The dollar rose to its highest against the yen in almost seven years as economic and political troubles across Asia were exacerbated after Pakistan tested five nuclear devices.

"There seems to be a general heightened level of uncertainty around the world," said Hillel Waxman, manager of foreign exchange at Bank Leumi Trust Co., who sold marks and yen for dollars. "We're seeing more people buy dollars."

In midday trading, the dollar rose to 138.81 yen, its highest since August 19, 1991, from 137.45 in New York Wednesday. Waxman said the dollar could rise to 140 yen in a few days.

The dollar fell to 1.7800 marks from 1.7840 marks, as concern

waned that Russia is on the verge of financial collapse after President Boris Yeltsin assured investors there is enough foreign currency reserves to keep markets stable.

"Things broke loose in a panic yesterday, and today people are reassessing the situation, saying 'maybe it's not as bad for Western Europe as originally was thought,'" said Bill Bertha, manager of foreign exchange at Mellon Bank in Pittsburgh.

The Pakistani tests spurred new worries among traders and investors about the Asian region, which has been beset with economic and political troubles since last summer.

"There's edginess about what's going on in South Asia," said



Dollar 3.644 ▲ 0.011%

Basket 3.8872 ▼ 0.33%

Mark 2.0397 ▼ 1.201%

Sterling 5.9157 ▼ 0.969%

Richard Koss, currency strategist at MFR Inc., a money management firm.

The yen has lost 3.8% against the dollar this month on concern that turmoil in Indonesia will drag

down Japan's economy. Japan is the country's largest creditor and trading partner. The Indonesian currency, or rupiah, fell yesterday as much as 9.8% amid reports of rioting on the island of Sumatra.

Earlier, the dollar rose to a 10-day high of 1.7878 marks after Russian financial markets plunged yesterday on speculation the government might not be able to pay its debts — most of which is owed to Germany — and might devalue its currency, the ruble.

The dollar retreated in midmorning New York trading as traders and investors reassessed the impact of Russia's troubles on Germany, Russia's biggest lender and trading partner.

Also boosting sentiment in the market was a recovery in Russian

stocks and the ruble and as the government said it is in talks with foreign lenders for an emergency loan. The International Monetary Fund, which has one current loan to Russia, said no new loans are planned.

"Germany, as it goes to the euro, is more independent from Russia," said J.P. Neergard, manager of foreign exchange at Den Danske Bank. "Also, Russia's problems aren't taken as seriously. There are no tanks in Moscow or St. Petersburg."

The dollar's decline was triggered by a large sale of the US currency by an undisclosed seller. "It was a big order," said David Ogg, manager of foreign exchange at Dresdner Bank. "The dollar just collapsed." (Bloomberg)

Crude falls on low US demand

Energy

Crude oil fell almost 2 percent after a report showed an unanticipated rise in US gasoline stockpiles last week, indicating lower-than-expected gasoline demand.

Crude oil for July delivery trading on London's International Petroleum Exchange rose 1.7% in the previous four days amid hopes that last night's inventory report from the American Petroleum Institute would show a drop in gasoline stockpiles.

July Brent crude oil fell 25 cents to \$13.98 a barrel on the IPE.

Precious metals

Palladium dropped as prices

almost double their year-ago levels kept consumers away and traders bet mounting Russian financial problems would speed exports.

A near five-month halt in exports from Russia, which last year accounted for more than two-thirds of global palladium supply, drove the metal's price up to an all-time high of \$425 an ounce last week.

Spot Palladium fell \$14.50 to \$311 an ounce in interbank trading.

Others

Coffee fell as showers soaked crops in Vietnam and parts of Central America, easing concern that crops that will be harvested later this year will be damaged by



Gold \$294.35 ▲ 0.48%

Crude Oil \$13.99 ▼ 0.78%

CRB 218.5 ▼ 0.13%

drought. The rain in Panama and Costa Rica marks the start of the wet season in those countries, commodities brokerage GNI Ltd. reports, in its daily market commentary.

Coffee for July delivery fell \$31 to \$1,802 a metric ton on the

COMMODITIES

London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange. Cocoa fell after Dutch grinders said they dropped their objections to a European Union plan to allow up to 5% non-cocoa fat in chocolate across the 15-member EU.

The decision by the Netherlands Cocoa Association, which represents Europe's biggest cocoa grinding industry, increases the possibility that the EU will resolve its 25-year dispute over chocolate recipes.

If the plan is approved then some analysts say that demand for cocoa beans may be cut by as much as 200,000 tons a year. Cocoa for July delivery fell \$14 to \$1,118 a metric ton on LIFFE.

Copper rose as robust demand in Europe and the US at a time of relatively low global supply offset concern about weak Asian con-

sumption levels and future increases in global production.

While slower economic growth across much of Asia has reduced purchasing power and demand for copper-containing goods such as cars, consumption remains robust in Europe and the US.

Copper stockpiles in London Metal Exchange-registered warehouses have fallen 4,225 metric tons, or 1.6%, since Tuesday, with the bulk of the decline in European warehouses. Copper for three-month delivery rose \$55 to \$1,731 on LME.

Nickel rose as stockpiles of the metal fell. Stockpiles in the LME-registered warehouses fell 258 tons to 63,450 tons. Nickel for three-month delivery rose \$110 to \$5,010 on LME. (Bloomberg)

US bonds rise on Asian uncertainty

NEW YORK — US bonds rose as turbulence in Asian markets boosted the appeal of safer Treasury securities, and as the dollar gained.

"Most Asian markets sold off again and we've got a firmer dollar," said George Adell, trader at Philadelphia-based Starboard Capital Markets Inc. "As long as we're seen as a safe haven, Treasuries will benefit."

Bonds were little moved by a report showing the economy grew at a 4.8 percent annual rate in the first quarter, up from an initial estimate of 4.2%. The GDP price deflator, a gauge of inflation, rose

1.0%, up from the 0.9% initially reported.

The benchmark 30-year Treasury bond rose about 6/32, or \$1.88 per \$1,000 bond, to 104 3/32, pushing its yield down 1 basis point to 5.83%. Two-year note yields fell 1 basis point to 5.53%.

"The market has one eye on what's happening in the US and the other has drifted to international concerns," said Charles Reinhardt, bond strategist at ABN Amro Inc.

In a separate report, the government said the number of first-time applicants for unemployment ben-



US 30-year T-bill yield

5.83 ▼ 0.01

Profits last week fell 2,000 to 312,000, in line with expectations.

Slowing Asian economies will help dampen inflation, further

enhancing the attractiveness of fixed-income investments.

"Events in Asia are feeding expectations for lower global growth and slower inflation," said Ruaridh MacDonald, a fixed-income fund manager who helps oversee about \$15 billion at Dresdner RCM Global Investors. "This is the 'golden scenario' for Western bond markets, and it's pushing Treasury yields lower."

MacDonald expects 30-year yields will be about 5.50% by the end of the year.

Analysts say developments in Asia, and also in Russia, where the

central bank Wednesday tripled its key interest rate to 150% to defend the ruble, will provide enough support for bonds to outweigh reports later expected to show the US economy remains robust.

Many investors predict the robust US economy may soon lose steam as Asia's economic and financial woes reduce demand for US goods abroad.

Weakening Asian currencies make imported goods cheaper in the US and American exports to Asia more expensive, reducing demand for US goods both at home and abroad. (Bloomberg)

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COMPUTER TRAINING LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND



Computer Education at the Jewish Institute for the Blind helps keep the students abreast of current technology. Some of the computers are equipped with magnifying devices which greatly enlarge the screens. There is also new voice to speak to one another. The students are taught to use recently acquired modern power-Braille that appears on the computer screen. The Institute's library has a large selection of books in Braille and on tapes for the pupil's use. There is a wide choice of textbooks for high school and university students, and a large collection of religious works is also available. The recording studio and news service enable the blind throughout Israel to keep up with current events.

TORAH AND HESSED

Can you tell the history of the holy city of Jerusalem, describe the last century until today, without Kollel Shomre Hachomos Rabbi Meir Baal Hanes Charity, and Betei Hungarim?

The year 1858, Gedolei Hador, leaders of thousands in the kingdom of Australia and Hungary, with their sharp outlook to the future, founded the Kollel in Israel so that it should continue the tradition of their forefathers and establish a great "tree of life" – a foundation which will support the needy in the holy land, helping the unfortunate and the sick.

From then until today, there has been a great expansion of the Kollel's activities. 3,740 families consisting of 23,000 people received grants towards the holidays; approximately 1,700 brides and grooms received *hachnosas kalla* grants before their wedding; \$30,000 was distributed as interest-free loans every week.

And the housing projects: All over town, in every neighborhood apartments were built by Kollel Shomre Hachomos with kollels, mikvas and other public institutions. 530 *Talmidai Chachamim* learn in the 17 kollels of the Kollel, learning different courses of Gemara. 400 students learn in our beautiful Talmud Torah in Betei Hungarim.

In the neighborhoods of Givat Shaul in the west, and in Sanhedria Meurchevet in the east, Kiryat Shomrei Hachomos apartments were built. In Ramot, new neighborhood is being constructed in the north which will consist of 450-500 apartments. Right now, 180 families live there already in the neighborhood built by the Kollel called "Kiryat Dasi Sofer" in dedication of Rabbi Akiva Sofer z"l, who was known to say about the Kollel: "Our Kollel, with all its activities is the beauty of our holy land." In the new neighborhood of Ramat Shlomo (Shualat) the kollel built 120 apartments, and a synagogue is under construction in that neighborhood as well.

Kollel Shomre Hachomos, with its variety of projects is the oxygen of Jerusalem in the physical as well as in the spiritual sense. In addition to all the aforementioned, 240 widows with 280 orphans are supported monthly by receiving stipends from the Kollel, and in addition to them 166 needy families also receive these stipends on a regular basis. In 1996 more than 700 mothers received financial assistance after giving birth and more than 220 people received financial assistance for medical expenses.

Jerusalem's beauty dwells in "Betei Hungarim" and the projects of Kollel Shomre Hachomos.

Torah Means

by Moshe Kohn

You shall not harass... nor shall you oppress...

Exodus 22:26

Cursed be him who withholds justice...

Deuteronomy 27:19

What is the Torah, the anniversary of whose bequeathal to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai some 34 centuries ago we celebrate on Shavuot?

The beginning and the end of Torah are *hessed*, performing acts of lovingkindness, says Rabbi Simla'i (Sota 14a).

How so? At the beginning God clothes Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:21); at the end He buries Moses (Deuteronomy 34:6) – two characteristic acts of *hessed*.

And why is the Book of Ruth read in the Shavuot morning synagogue service? What is the connection between this bucolic idyll and the Season of the Giving of Our Torah, as Shavuot is called in the liturgy?

The Talmudic Sages suggest several connections. One is that the heroine of the story, Ruth, is the ancestor of David, whose birthday and death anniversary fall on Shavuot.

Secondly, the story's main

events occur in the seven-week barley and wheat harvest season beginning on Pessah and culminating in Shavuot's "First Fruits Festival."

Third, as the official anniversary of the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, Shavuot is considered appropriate for reading the story of Ruth, the exemplary proselyte. Her declaration of fidelity to her mother-in-law, Naomi – who has just been impoverished and bereft of her husband and two sons, and to her adopted people/father, Israel – is unsurpassed in its exquisite beauty:

"Entreat me not to leave thee, to turn back from following thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest there will I die, and there will I be buried. Thus and more may God do to me if anything but death parts me from thee" (Ruth 1:16-17).

There is yet another connection, suggested by Jerusalem Talmud scholar Dr. Gavriel Haim Cohn, who emphasizes that the book of Ruth's main theme is *hessed*.

In a monograph published some years ago by the Education and Culture Ministry, Cohn cites the statement of the Talmudic Sage Rabbi Ze'ira: Ruth was written to teach the rewards of acts of lovingkindness (Midrash Ruth Rabba

2:15). Rabbi Ze'ira does not explain. Cohn, however, cites the great variety of *hessed* acts described in Ruth.

There is Ruth's *hessed* in not forsaking her grieving mother-in-law. There is the observance by Boaz and his laborers of the precept of leaving the harvest residue for paupers, non-Jews, orphans and widows living among us (Leviticus 19:9-10). 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19-21).

Cohn maintains that it is thanks to these and other acts of *hessed* that this tale has its happy denouement, culminating in the birth of David from the union of Ruth and Boaz; David, founder of the United Kingdom of Israel, paradigmatic king, "Sweet Singer of Israel," progenitor of the Messiah who is to redeem the Jewish people and the world.

Hence, the Book of Ruth is a reminder that the way to achieve redemption, the ultimate Redemption, is through acts of *hessed*.

ISRAEL IS a land rich in *hessed*. At the grassroots level, and also in many places in our public bureaucracies, there are untold times-36 Righteous Ones, both Jews and non-Jews, exerting themselves – as individuals or through numerous *hessed* institutions and organizations – to speed

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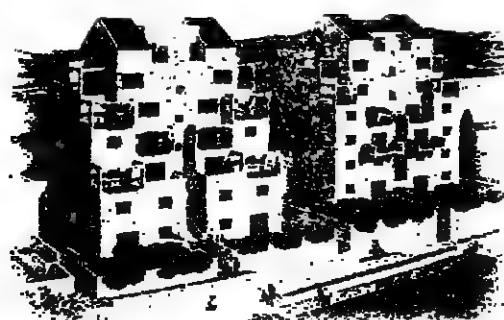
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If our society consisted only or largely of those who make the headlines by shamelessly "stealing the common from the goose," treating the public treasury as an inexhaustible gold mine for financing their pet projects and fattening their own salaries and perquisites, but finding no money to help bail out impoverished local authorities – to lift our educational and health-care systems out of the abyss, to promote economic projects that will bolster our economy, to improve housing conditions for olim and young couples and slum dwellers, both Jewish and non-Jewish, to offer more help to demobilized soldiers, to keep talented soldiers in the standing army – if the Israeli nation consisted only or largely of these pirates, our society would long since have disintegrated.

THE TALMUDIC sages offer a fascinating, frightening explanation of why God chose the Jewish people to be the bearer of the Torah's messages. The key is the Hebrew word *azim*, which can mean fierce, or pertinacious.

Rabbi Meir says the Torah was given to the Jews because they

are *azim*.

In the School of Rabbi Yishmael they interpret the passage in Deuteronomy 33:2, "In His right hand he has a fiery law for them," as follows: The Blessed Holy One said: These people are qualified to be given a law of fire.

Others say: The way of this people is fire, and if the Torah had not been given to the Jews, no nation or tongue would have been able to withstand them. This is what Resh Lakish (Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish) meant when he said: There are three *azim*: the Jews among the nations, the dog among the beasts, and the cock among the fowl. Some add: the goat among the flocks. Still others add: the caper among the trees.

In other words, God chose us to deliver the Torah to humanity not because our blood is bluer or our IQ higher, but because we are the fiercest of the human lot, and we need the Torah to rein us in, to keep us from consuming all the nations and tongues.

Indeed, we are "stiff-necked" (Exodus 32:9) and more.

Rabbi Yakim, like Resh Lakish, says: There are three *azim*: the dog among the beasts, the cock among the fowl, and the Jews among the nations.

On which Rabbi Yitzhak ben

Radfa comments: You think this is meant pejoratively [in the sense of destructively fierce]. But I tell you that it is meant as praise: the Jew pertinaciously adheres to his Jewishness even if it means being crucified.

THE GREAT 19th-century hasidic leader Rabbi Menahem Mendel Morgenstern of Kotzk taught:

Why is Shavuot called "Season of the Giving of Our Torah" rather than "Season of Our Receiving/Accepting the Torah"? Because giving the Torah was a one-time act, whereas receiving/accepting it is a continuous act whereby each individual receives/accepts it every day of his life according to his capacity.

The Kotzker also explained why, if God was so anxious to have the Torah observed scrupulously, He did not give it to the Angels, who can do no wrong, rather than to frail Man. He said: Indeed, if God wished mere perfect observance of the Torah, He would have given it to the Angels. But He does not desire mere perfect automatic observance. What He really cherishes is the effort, the thought and the intention that human beings must put into overcoming all kinds of inhibitions and obstacles in their striving to do the right thing.

Revolution in Talmud Publishing

A new, monumental edition of the Talmud, forthcoming by Ketivim Publishers, marks a major breakthrough in the world of Talmudic publications. The *Babylonian Talmud*, with the *Mishna and Minor Tractates*, in one volume, with seven encyclopedic indexes, edited by Attn. Zvi H. Preisler, makes the Babylonian Talmud available to every Jewish home and accessible to every reader. This new edition has several striking advantages. Traditionally, the Talmud has been published in a set of 20 huge volumes, with a wealth of additional commentaries and novella – both crowded on the page with the actual text itself, and in the back of each volume. Here, the entire Talmud (including the *Mishnah* and *Minor Tractates*) is presented in one volume, newly set in a clear, modern type face, without the commentary of Rashi, the novella of Tosaphot, or the other apparatus which are customarily printed on the page. While these commentaries are useful, they can also overwhelm, and the present format makes it easier for the reader who wants to see the text of the Talmud itself. In addition, unlike the traditional editions, the text is divided into paragraphs, and contains basic punctuation into sentences and clauses. Both these features enable the reader to more easily follow the units of argumentation within and among the different *sugyot*, and to determine where one subject ends and a new one begins.

But the most significant innovation lies in the seven indexes found in this edition. The most important and extensive of these is the detailed subject index, containing a total of 90,000 main subject entries and secondary entries, enabling the reader or researcher to locate at a glance material pertaining to his subject of concern. In addition, there are indexes listing the tractates and chapters of the Talmud (by title) arranged both alphabetically and by their order of appearance, and an index of biblical verses, quoted in the Talmud. In addition, the sources of all biblical verses are cited within the text, by chapter and by verse, where they appear.

Needless to say, this edition is not intended as a substitute for the *Vilna-Romani* edition of the Talmud, much-beloved and venerated by generations of *talmidei-hakhamim* as The Talmud, with its encyclopedic wealth of commentaries and novella. However, even for the traditional scholar, who is used to swimming in the "sea of the Talmud," the new Ketivim edition may serve as a highly useful supplementary volume. For the non-expert, this one-volume Talmud may serve both as a convenient, basic reference volume, and as a starting point for studying the Talmud – the fount and source of all traditional law and thought.

The publication of this volume brings to three the number of basic Jewish texts published by Ketivim publishers in this modern, convenient one-volume format, fully indexed. *Maimonides' Mishneh Torah* (1986) and Rabbi Joseph Karo's *Shulchan Arukh* (1993) have previously been published by the same house in similar format. With the publication of the *Babylonian Talmud*, a comprehensive Jewish library is now available to every Jewish family at an affordable price and in a compact format.

Credit, both for conceiving and launching this enterprise, and for its painstaking execution, and completion, is due to Attn. Zvi Preisler, founder of Ketivim Publishers and Editor-in-Chief of all three volumes. Preisler brings to this project a unique combination of erudition in both the world of Torah scholarship and in that of halakha. In his youth, Preisler studied at yeshivot Kfar Haroeh and Mercaz Harav Kook; he then took his Master's degree at Hebrew University's law faculty. He was then a researcher at the university's Institute for Jewish Law, where he worked closely with former assistant Chief Justice of Israel's Supreme Court,



Attn. Zvi H. Preisler, Director of Ketivim Publishers

Prof. Menachem Elon, and served as legal advisor to the Ministry of the Interior. Preisler then opened his own successful law practice, and simultaneously founded Ketivim Publishers, which specializes in Israeli law. Following its success in this area, Ketivim extended its activities to include the classics of Jewish halakha.

Preisler conceived a special format utilizing modern printing techniques and computer technology to make these central works of Jewish law and thought available to everybody. Plaudits to Attn. Rabbi Shmuel Havlin – assistant director of Ketivim Publishers, and Rabbi Hanokh Havlin, head of Kollet Ateret Shlomo – assistant editor of the project as well as to the other staff at Ketivim, for the diligence and meticulous care in the preparation and editing of the text and indices.

by Rabbi Jonathan Chipman

RESCUING JEWISH BABIES

Every year, thousands of babies are carried out of Israel, most of which have no medical basis, and are done for socio-economic reasons, states Dr. El J. Schussheim, director of Efrat, a non-profit international volunteer organization aimed at supporting Jewish childbearing in Israel. Over the past 20 years, by providing social, psychological and financial support, Efrat has succeeded in saving tens of thousands of babies whose mothers had decided to terminate their lives because of their socio-economic problems.

Efrat, known in the English speaking world as the Committee for the Rescue of Jewish Babies (C.R.J.B.), aims to: prevent unnecessary abortions – encourage and support Jewish childbearing, and strengthen the Jewish families.

With a budget derived almost exclusively from donations, Efrat is one of the only organizations working in this field.

"We believe in a woman's right to decide," Schussheim explains. "We cannot and do not prevent a woman from having an abortion if she really wants one. We are against demonstrations and violence and condemning breaking the law. We are pro-choice. Every woman has the right to do what she wants," but we feel she should be fully informed first.

We are seeking to reach a clientele that is mainly married women between the ages of 17 and 40, who are healthy and are carrying healthy babies.

Efrat functions on three main levels. One, it carries out an information campaign to inform women of the seriousness of

what they are contemplating. Two, Efrat provides economic aid and emotional support for the woman and her family. And three, Efrat offers counseling for women concerned about malformations. "We can promise her that if she has the child she will not regret it," Schussheim states. "We have never had a case where a woman regretted having her baby."

In 1997, the organization saved 854 children through direct economic support. "We believe many more were indirectly saved through our information campaign," Schussheim claims. "We would like to save 8,000 instead of 800 a year. For as the Talmud says: Every child is an entire world. On who saves a life is like one who saves an entire world."

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At Netanya's Laniado Hospital's recent annual dinner held at the Gan Oranim Halls in Tel Aviv, Finance Minister Dr. Yaakov Neeman informed Laniado's Executive Director Gershon Lieder that the Government would provide matching funds for the planned Orthopedic Department. Over 400 people attended the prestigious function with all proceeds dedicated to purchasing the necessary medical equipment for the Orthopedic Department and the new Operating Theatres now under construction.

(Photographed from left to right - Chief Rabbi Lau, Hospital Director Gershon Lieder, Industrialist Yitzchok Tshuva, Finance Minister Neeman)

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PAKISTAN

Continued from Page 1

It is now more urgent than it was yesterday that both Pakistan and India renounce further tests, sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and take decisive steps to reduce tensions in South Asia and reverse the dangerous arms race," he said.

The decision to declare a state of emergency follows on the heels of warnings by Pakistan prior to its nuclear testing that India was planning a pre-emptive strike on Pakistan's nuclear installations.

Yesterday, Pakistan told India's ambassador that it had acquired "credible evidence" of a possible pre-emptive strike by India on its nuclear facilities.

India has called the allegations "baseless and malicious".

Pakistan warned India of "massive retaliation" if it attacked.

The Indian ambassador was "clearly told that any such attack would warrant a swift and massive retaliation with unforeseen consequences," the Pakistani Foreign Ministry said, in a statement.

Pakistan's military has confirmed its troops are on alert at nuclear installations around the country.

PULLOUT

Continued from Page 1

"I believe there will be no solution other than a two-digit percentage point pullback," he said. The peace process will continue and I have no doubt that The Third Way's stand on this issue at this moment is critical." Kahan's Third Way Party is a pivotal member of Netanyahu's coalition.

Asked to define his party's "red line" beyond which it will not remain in the coalition, Kahan reportedly said it is the cessation of the peace process.

Among the indications that intensive diplomatic activity is under way is the presence in Washington of Netanyahu's foreign policy adviser, Uzi Arad, who was sent from Netanyahu's entourage in China to Washington for talks with US officials.

YASSIN

Continued from Page 1

"Different ideas were raised and the defense establishment is consolidating its position now," said one participant. The guiding question, he said, is "where will Yassin do the least amount of damage?"

One senior IDF officer said Yassin had deceived Israel, and PA officials by using his medical condition to gain permission to go abroad and then embarking on a

Late Wednesday, US-made F-16 fighter jets and army helicopters were on patrol over the Kahuta nuclear research station, 40 kilometers east of Islamabad. Kahuta is where it is believed Pakistan conducted the bulk of its nuclear research and uranium enrichment program.

Pakistan's retaliatory tests virtually guarantee a nuclear arms race on the Asian subcontinent, one of the poorest regions in the world.

"We have matched India with five tests of our own," Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said, in his speech to the nation.

Originally it was believed that only two devices were exploded at a remote test site in the desolate Baluchistan province.

At a news conference afterward, Sharif said the explosions did not release any radioactivity into the atmosphere.

He also promised his nation would safeguard the nuclear technology used to develop its nuclear weapons program.

"We have not and will not transfer sensitive technologies to other states or entities," the prime minister said.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman could not immediately

PRESSURE

Continued from Page 1

Several participants called this reporter to complain about Reshef's caustic remarks, even though they had been asked to keep the meeting secret.

Reshef was not the only assessment presented at the meeting, however. Former UN ambassador Gad Ya'acobi told Walker he thought the government would implement the redeployment and that after this a national unity government would be formed, which would conduct the final-status negotiations.

Ron Pundak, one of the architects of the Oslo Accords, said that even a redeployment of 7 percent would be considered an accomplishment, coming from a Likud government depending on a right-wing, religious coalition.

Other participants included Dr. Yair Hirschfeld, Prof. Moshe Maoz, Prof. Efraim Ya'ari, and Rabbi Naftali Rotenberg.

fund-raising tour.

"The State of Israel has to decide how it is going to deal with Yassin," he said. "If he is here [in the Gaza Strip], I'm not so sure he'll sow peace. On the other hand, here the PA will want to control and supervise him," said the officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

A decision is expected in the coming days, defense sources said.

Meanwhile, the chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Uzi Landau

be reached for comment on the Pakistani tests, but Beijing earlier clearly placed the blame for tension in South Asia on India.

"The current situation in South Asia was created solely by India," spokesman Zhu Bangzao had told a regular news briefing when asked if Beijing supported or opposed a nuclear test by Pakistan after India's tests.

In New Delhi, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said the reported detonations "vindicated" India's decision to conduct its own nuclear tests two weeks ago.

Jay Bushinsky adds:

Pakistan's detonation of two nuclear devices evoked virtually the same reaction in Israel that was prompted by India's nuclear tests two weeks ago.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Aviv Shir-On yesterday answered journalists' questions with an identically-worded reply, which made no direct reference to either Pakistan or India.

"Israel has signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which bans all kinds of nuclear explosions," Shir-On said. "It is committed to its signature and hopes all the countries of the world will become parties to this treaty."

standing ovation.

Next was widely published freelance journalist Ruth Seligman, who came to Israel in 1951, and whose positive stories about the country have been read in many parts of the world.

Then there was National Labor Court President Judge Stephen Adler, who has been living here since 1968. Chicago-born Fran and Bernice Alpert, who in 1957 spent their honeymoon in Israel, but who didn't make aliyah till 1979, started Archeological Seminars for family and friends in 1981, and since then have attracted nearly half a million people to their archeological excavations.

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin and his wife Vicki spent each other in Israel in the summer of 1961, returned in 1964 as married couple leaders for the Yeshiva University Summer program, and, after many subsequent visits, came to stay in 1983, exchanging the plush comfort of New York's Upper West Side for the then-dusty outpost of Efrat, where Rabbi Riskin is chief rabbi.

Israel Feldman, who immigrated from Toronto in 1993, was the youngest honoree. A hi-tech professional, he is Internet planning consultant to the Prime Minister's Office.

ON Monday, Rabbi Riskin hosted an ordination ceremony and dinner for 11 young rabbis who completed the course of study at the Joseph Strauss Rabbinical Seminary of the Ohr Torah Stone Colleges and Graduate Programs in Efrat.

At the ceremony, Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of Great Britain, explained the difference between a rebbe and a rabbi.

A rebbe speaks to 1,000 people, and each person there is convinced that he is speaking just to him. A rabbi speaks to 1,000 people, and each person is convinced that he is speaking to the person next to him. Sacks' message to the new rabbis was: "Speak like a rebbe!"

Dry Bones



GRAPEVINE

By GREEK PWCASHMAN

There were only three MKs and no ministers at the Jerusalem Day dedication of Yitzhak Rabin Boulevard, which is to run through the planned government complex in Jerusalem. When the project is completed, the boulevard will link the Foreign Ministry to the Prime Minister's Office.

The Jerusalem Municipality put out hundreds of chairs for anticipated guests, but less than 70 people attended the moving ceremony at which both Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak and Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert underscored the appropriateness of naming the boulevard on Jerusalem Day.

Only 10 days before Rabin was assassinated, said Olmert, he had been with him in Washington and heard him speak in depth of what Jerusalem meant to him.

"Yitzhak Rabin was born in Jerusalem, he fought for Jerusalem, he liberated Jerusalem, and he was the minister of defense for the unification of Jerusalem," Olmert said.

Looking at the empty chairs, Leah Rabin noted the paucity of City Council and Knesset representation and commented on how sad it was. She would have found it a lot sadder had she attended the Jerusalem Day memorial ceremony at Ammunition Hill, where none of the speakers, including President Ezer Weizman and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu mentioned Rabin's name, though he had been chief of General Staff during the Six Day War.

The AACI, in celebration of 100 years of North American aliyah and Israel's jubilee, on Tuesday honored representatives of the last five decades of North American aliyah for the impact they have made on Israeli society.

First was former AACI president David Breslau, who came in 1949, and who in 1951 was one of the founders of AACI. An ardent Labor Zionist and social activist, Breslau, who is currently lobbying for seniors' rights, received a

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Refrigeration firm's bankrupt stock? (6,6)
- 8 Presented to a minor journalist? (7)
- 9 Clarify former scheme without one? (7)
- 11 Medicare senator suffers a breakdown (3-4)
- 12 A cripple home after WW2 battle? (7)
- 13 His sickness once caused recurrent disgust? (5)
- 14 Expenditure on excursions (9)
- 16 Can a starter be produced in the kitchen? (3-6)
- 19 Brief summary about EU food policy (5)
- 21 Key conditions for producing properties? (7)
- 23 Anything but poetic? (7)
- 24 Homesteader who pays on the nail? (7)
- 25 Fail to discharge (4,3)
- 26 Pioneer group with progressive political views? (7,5)

DOWN

- 1 Violent outburst after launch of distress signal (5-2)
- 2 In Cotswolds terminology, he's a gaffer? (7)
- 3 Duck below the bedspread (9)
- 4 Knight entered region of conflict (5)
- 5 Person made love to one of the choir? (7)
- 6 Trained to arrange commercial transaction (5-2)
- 7 Epistolary scholar (3,2,7)
- 10 The loveliest rocky plant (4-2-6)
- 15 Arriving after negotiating mountain bends (7,2)
- 17 Scared by anyone but Edward? (7)
- 18 A count in Pennsylvania may kneel on it? (7)
- 19 Shot in the arm from both directions? (7)
- 20 Hurried to serve small duck in Indian dish? (7)
- 22 Glacial pinnacle causes terrible scars (5)

SOLUTIONS

FACTS AND FIGURES

ACROSS: 1. BARN, 2. BARN, 3. BARN, 4. BARN, 5. BARN, 6. BARN, 7. BARN, 8. BARN, 9. BARN, 10. BARN, 11. BARN, 12. BARN, 13. BARN, 14. BARN, 15. BARN, 16. BARN, 17. BARN, 18. BARN, 19. BARN, 20. BARN, 21. BARN, 22. BARN, 23. BARN, 24. BARN, 25. BARN, 26. BARN, 27. BARN, 28. BARN, 29. BARN, 30. BARN, 31. BARN, 32. BARN, 33. BARN, 34. BARN, 35. BARN, 36. BARN, 37. BARN, 38. BARN, 39. BARN, 40. BARN, 41. BARN, 42. BARN, 43. BARN, 44. BARN, 45. BARN, 46. BARN, 47. BARN, 48. BARN, 49. BARN, 50. BARN, 51. BARN, 52. BARN, 53. BARN, 54. BARN, 55. BARN, 56. BARN, 57. BARN, 58. BARN, 59. BARN, 60. BARN, 61. BARN, 62. BARN, 63. BARN, 64. BARN, 65. BARN, 66. BARN, 67. BARN, 68. BARN, 69. BARN, 70. BARN, 71. BARN, 72. BARN, 73. BARN, 74. BARN, 75. BARN, 76. BARN, 77. BARN, 78. BARN, 79. BARN, 80. BARN, 81. BARN, 82. BARN, 83. BARN, 84. BARN, 85. BARN, 86. BARN, 87. BARN, 88. BARN, 89. BARN, 90. BARN, 91. BARN, 92. BARN, 93. BARN, 94. BARN, 95. BARN, 96. BARN, 97. BARN, 98. BARN, 99. BARN, 100. BARN.

Yesterday's Quick Solution

ACROSS: 1. Count, 4. Marshal, 8. Bedouin, 9. Barna, 10. Rural, 11. Otis, 12. Rats, 13. Tavern, 17. Tander, 20. Owl, 23. Acetone, 24. Sals, 25. Edits, 27. Gherkin, 28. Baggage, 29. Bessy.

DOWN: 1. Cabaret, 2. Under, 3. Ticker, 4. Mascot, 5. Robert, 6. Edward, 7. Rats, 15. Aardvark, 16. Viewing, 18. Ashida, 19. Masonry, 21. Mergers, 22. Acerb, 23. Oasis, 25. Llama.

QUICK CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Of little weight (5)
- 4 Beason (6)
- 9 Finger joint (7)
- 10 Trash (6)
- 11 Slender (4)
- 12 Basket (7)
- 13 Humour (3)
- 14 Church recess (4)
- 16 Require (4)
- 18 Tot (3)
- 20 Ruffian (7)
- 21 Japanese wine (4)
- 24 Lechymose (5)
- 25 Perceps (7)
- 26 Flemish painter (6)
- 27 Fashion (5)

DOWN

- 1 Probable (6)
- 2 Dutch cheese (5)
- 3 Steal (4)
- 5 Priestly candidate (8)
- 6 Worship (7)
- 7 Guarantee (6)
- 8 Entice (5)
- 13 Methodist (8)
- 15 Maxim (7)
- 17 Spray (6)
- 18 Astound (5)
- 19 Flimsy paper (6)
- 22 Torment (5)
- 23 Low platform (4)

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OLD-TALPOT, NEW BUILDING, 2.5, 3.5 + garden, 4.5 rooms, private heading, immediate occupancy. AMBASSADOR, Tel. 02-561-8101. (17077)

BARGAIN KIRYAT-SHIMUEL, 3, furnished, balconies, roof, magnificent view, below Supreme Court. Exclusive to AVI KOREN. Tel. 02-571-9740. (16867)

BAIT-VEGAN, 150 sq. m. + license to build 60 sq. m. more, unique, quiet, exclusive to KATHY ROSENBERG BROKERS, Tel. 02-551-5516 (N.S.) (68)

FOR THE KNOWLEDGEABLE, Ramat-Matza, plot 1200 sq. m., special view, 7 rooms, + view. Exclusive to T.K.M. Tel. 02-552-5041. (68)

GREEK-COLONY, ATTRACTIVE PENTHOUSE, 5 rooms, quality construction, excellent view. CORINNE DAVAR. Tel. 02-573-3385. (68)

GREEK-COLONY LUXURY PROJECT, 6, duplex, 1st floor, 2 bedrooms, high standards. Exclusive to AVI KOREN, INC. Tel. 02-571-9740. (68)

HABITAT REAL ESTATE, Mossasrah, 3, spacious, terrace, great view, parking. \$240,000. Tel. Elud 02-561-1222. e-mail: portico@netvision.net.il (68)

RAV-BERLIN, 3.5 ROOMS, low floor, 2 balconies, immediate. Exclusive to AMBASSADOR, Tel. 02-561-8101. (68)

REHAVIA, 4/5 (130 sq. m.) 1st floor, large terrace, garage, storage, ALEX LOSKY REAL ESTATE (SHIRAN). Tel. 02-551-5516 (N.S.) (68)

REHAVIA, QUIET, CENTRAL, spacious, 6, garden, covered parking, CORINNE DAVAR. Tel. 02-573-3385. (68)

NEAR PRESIDENT'S MANSION, 3, redecorated + invested, quiet, light, excellent exposures. Tel. 02-555-6744. (78243)

BAKA ARAB, WHOLE floor, connected apartments, 130 sq. m., unique, 2 bedrooms. Opportunity! Tel. 02-535-6183 (even), 02-571-8913. (78262)

RAMOT, 7, 8.5 + garden, best area, summer possession, priced to sell. Tel. 02-586-4850. (78225)

ABU TOR, 7, (170 m) 2nd floor, beautifully finished, terrace, panoramic view of peace forest, garage, storage, ALEX LOSKY REAL ESTATE (SHIRAN). Tel. 02-551-5516 (N.S.) (68)

ALON SHVUT, 5 rooms, 1st, balcony, view, well arranged, opportunity. \$210,000. Tel. 02-955-1397. (16065)

BAKA, PENTHOUSE, 5 + gallery, view, tremendous terrace, private elevator, storeroom, parking. T.O.P. REALTY. Tel. 02-551-5516. (7222)

BEIT HAKEREM, SUPERB cottage, 6, garden, parking, excellent location. I.A.C. Tel. 02-551-5516. (16851)

CENTRALLY LOCATED, OPPOSITE new Hilton, 3.5 rooms, balcony, special. ALEX LOSKY REAL ESTATE (CREB). Tel. 02-551-5516. (68)

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EFRAI, COTTAGE, 7.5 plus large basement, garden, must see, only \$25,000, Gerry Farkas at EFRAI REALTY. Tel. 02-555-5247. (16895)

EXCLUSIVE NADAN PLUS: Rehavia, (Evan Ezra), 4, Succah balcony, renovated, central, 2nd. Tel. 02-571-0707. (68)

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GERMAN COLONY, UNIQUE, 2-3 rooms, garden, second floor, two balconies, SIANI. Tel. 02-561-2424. (14939)

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HABITAT REAL ESTATE, Old Kalamon, 7.5 rooms, second floor, two balconies, balconies, view. Channa 02-561-1222. (17221)

KIRYAT SHIMUEL, 4 spacious + 2 balconies, balconies, view to Knesset, elevator, Rehavia, 3, 2nd, balcony, BEN ZVI. Tel. 02-563-0056. (16941)

MAMILLA HILTON, SUPER luxurious duplex with garden. Also breathtaking apartment facing Old City. Tel. 050-216-882. (78827)

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RAMOT ARAZIM, MUST see! New, luxury cottage, 8, garden, pool, BETTER BAIT. Tel. 02-563-5345. (68)

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TALBIEH, 4, EXCEPTIONALLY large, 1st floor, fine building, very quiet, green street, ALEX LOSKY REAL ESTATE (CREB). Tel. 02-551-5516. (68)

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SHA'ARE CHESED - REHAVIA, private house, best location, quiet, best investment. Tel. 02-563-5580, 052-408-532 (N.S.) (16128)

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BAKA, 4, ELEVATOR, no steps, near shops, transport, \$225,000. Exclusive to CORINNE DAVAR. Tel. 02-573-3385. (16851)

DWELLINGS

Jerusalem Area

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HABITAT REAL ESTATE, Ramot, 4, spacious, \$220,000, East Talpote, 4, balconies, view, \$230,000, Talpote, 4, quiet, greenery, \$272,000. Kiryat Shmuel, 4, balconies, garden, \$300,000, Abu Tor, 4, bright, quiet, \$325,000. Hotel apartment, 2, furnished, elevator, services. Tel. 02-561-1222 (Mariane). (16867)

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HABITAT REAL ESTATE, Talbich (Pineker), 5, luxurious, Shabbat elevator, storeroom, \$225,000. Tel. 02-561-1222 (Dana). (17196)

HABITAT REAL ESTATE, Mossasrah, 3, spacious, terrace, great view, parking, \$240,000. Tel. 02-561-1222 (Ehud). e-mail: portico@netvision.net.il (68)

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DWELLINGS
Tel Aviv

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RENTALS

YAMIT ON SEA shore, luxurious, terrace, guard, pool, Yaffo, superb villa, breathtaking view, for sale or rent. Tel. 050-216-882. (78224)

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SEA-VIEW, FULLY FURNISHED apartments - penthouse. Short / long term. Tel. 03-546-6820. (16134)

TEL AVIV PROMENADE, luxury apartment, 3, parking, long term. Tel. 050-336-730. Tel. 02-525-1580. (16144)

2.5, CENTRAL (BALFOR - SHEINKEN), like new, air-conditioning, parking, elevator, partly furnished, immediate! 050-210-499. (57107)

DWELLINGS

Tel Aviv

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HAYARKON STREET, OPPOSITE parking hotel, 2 rooms, quiet, furnished. (Also available 1/2/3 rooms). Tel. 050-331-346. (793305)

SALES/RENTALS

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SALES

NORTH TEL AVIV, roof apt., large, 5 rooms, elevator, parking, quiet. Tel. 050-551-598. (793310)

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KIBUTZ GALVOT, 2, ground floor, immediate, for investment / clinic. From private. \$120,000. Tel. 03-688-1560. (16178)

ONE LEVEL APARTMENT, luxurious, sea view, or rental, \$800,000. Tel. 050-212-900, 03-685-6757 (Della). (16128)

DWELLINGS

Dan Region

RENTALS

GARDEN APARTMENT, KIRYAT ONO, 4, low floor, from Tel. 03-530-255, Tel. 03-535-1534. (16187)

KIRYAT ONO, PENTHOUSE, 5, luxurious, from private, from August 1998. Tel. 03-535-1534, Tel. 052-530-255. (16188)

RAMAT HASHARON, 5, fully furnished, high floor, spacious, luxurious. Tel. 03-555-7198, Tel. 052-262-632. (782569)

SALES

COTTAGE - HOLON - SUPERB! Quiet! 5 rooms + roof + basement. Must see! Tel. 050-985-3393 (even), 03-628-2086. (16430)

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PETAQ TIQVA, 5, triplex + pool, most exclusive area, amazing, well invested. Anglo Saxon, 03-901122 Alex.

DWELLINGS

Sharon Area

HOLIDAY RENTALS

BEIT YANAI, BY SEA, air-conditioned houses for vacation. Tel. 03-866-5441 (Tamar). Tel. 03-866-5872 (Ofra). (16272)

RENTALS

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HERZLIYA PITUAH, SELECTION of villas, excellent locations, SHASHUA (MALDANA) Tel. 03-957-9878. (16141)

HERZLIYA, GANEI PANORAMA, 5 rooms, 5th, balcony, 2 parking, \$550. Tel. 03-555-4232, Tel. 052-606-910. (782448)

HERZLIYA ZAMERET, PENTHOUSE, 5, luxurious, central AC, sea view, \$2800. ANGLO-SAXON. Tel. 03-550-7254. (16181)

SALES/RENTALS

NETANYA Spring Bargains

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Nitzan Blvd 4 rooms, sun balcony \$90,000
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03-550-7254

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DWELLINGS

Sharon Area

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Brand new two roomed garden apt, prime central location, one of a kind, only \$175,000
Under construction - 4.5 room + balcony, walking distance to Ahuza, small building \$250,000
Near Merkaz Kith - privately owned spacious 4 room + balcony, 131 sq.m. 4th floor. 5 yr old building \$270,000

RENTALS

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Fully furnished roof - top central \$1200
Cottage 7 rooms + basement + a/c + closets - Biltu area

ANGLO-SAXON Tel. 09-7741133
09-7741133

SALES

BARGAIN IN HERZLIYA-PITUAH! In Sharon Hotel studio apt, view, near sea. \$179,000. Tel. 03-558-4558 (2945)

CAESAREA, LUXURIOUS HOUSE - dunnun, new, antique style, large pool, AC, central heat. Tel. 050-231-725, Tel. 050-338-128. (16283)

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SEASONS HOTEL, 16TH FLOOR, furnished apartment, 2 rooms, kitchen, bath, porch, TABU, \$265,000. KATZ. Tel. 06-532-2756. Tel. 06-693-4182. (793263)

DWELLINGS

Haifa and North

SALES

HOUSE, 3 ROOMS, Migdal Village, view to Kinneret and Arvel mountain. Tel. 03-956-3708. (782542)

DWELLINGS

Eilat and South

SALES

EILAT, GANIM BET, villa + swimming pool, 620 sq. m. Tel. 03-883-2201, 050-347-278 (Bracha). (16179)

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REALTY

Jerusalem Area

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SALES

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BUSINESS OFFERS

Jerusalem

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BUSINESS OFFERS

Tel Aviv

GENERAL

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COLLECTIONS

Sharon Area

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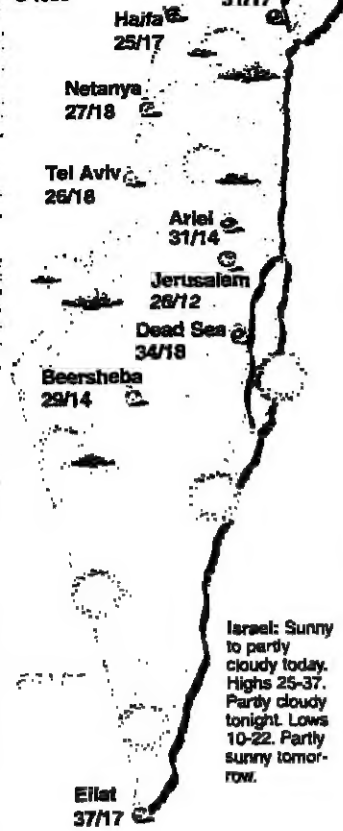
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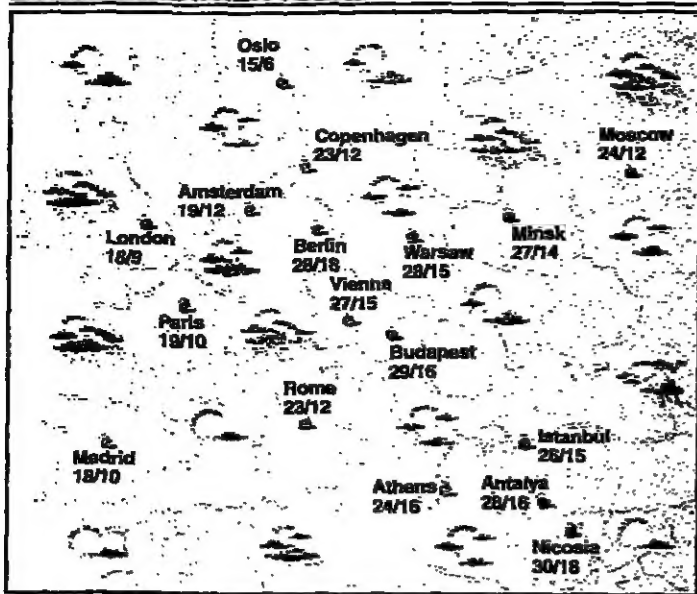
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THE WEATHER

ISRAEL
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EUROPE WEATHER TODAY

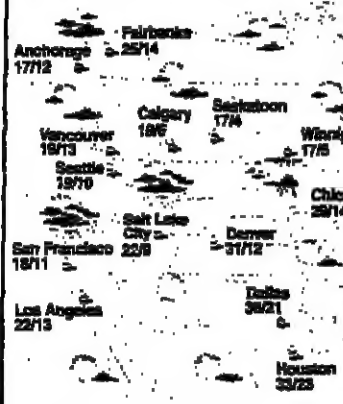


Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

ISRAEL CITIES		Today		Saturday		Sunday		Monday	
City	High/Low	City	High/Low	City	High/Low	City	High/Low	City	High/Low
Amman	31/18	Beersheba	29/18	Beersheba	29/18	Beersheba	29/18	Beersheba	29/18
Beersheba	29/18	Beersheba	29/18	Beersheba	29/18	Beersheba	29/18	Beersheba	29/18
Beersheba	29/18	Beersheba	29/18	Beersheba	29/18	Beersheba	29/18	Beersheba	29/18
Beersheba	29/18	Beersheba	29/18	Beersheba	29/18	Beersheba	29/18	Beersheba	29/18

June 2 June 10 June 17 June 24

NORTH AMERICA WEATHER TODAY



INTERNATIONAL CITIES

Today		Saturday		Sunday	
City	High/Low	City	High/Low	City	High/Low
Amsterdam	16/6	Amsterdam	16/6	Amsterdam	16/6
Amsterdam	16/6	Amsterdam	16/6	Amsterdam	16/6
Amsterdam	16/6	Amsterdam	16/6	Amsterdam	16/6
Amsterdam	16/6	Amsterdam	16/6	Amsterdam	16/6

SITUATIONS VACANT

Sharon Area

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(Michal or Ami)

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SITUATIONS VACANT

Haifa and North

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AU-PAIR FOR WARM family in Haifa, 8:00-20:00 (live-out), good conditions. Tel. 04-535-2552. [16253]

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SITUATIONS WANTED

Jerusalem

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Jerusalem

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HOUSEHOLD GOODS

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Jerusalem

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PURCHASE/SALES

Sharon Area

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

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PERSONALS

General

PERSONALS

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General

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MITSUBISHI SUPER LANDER

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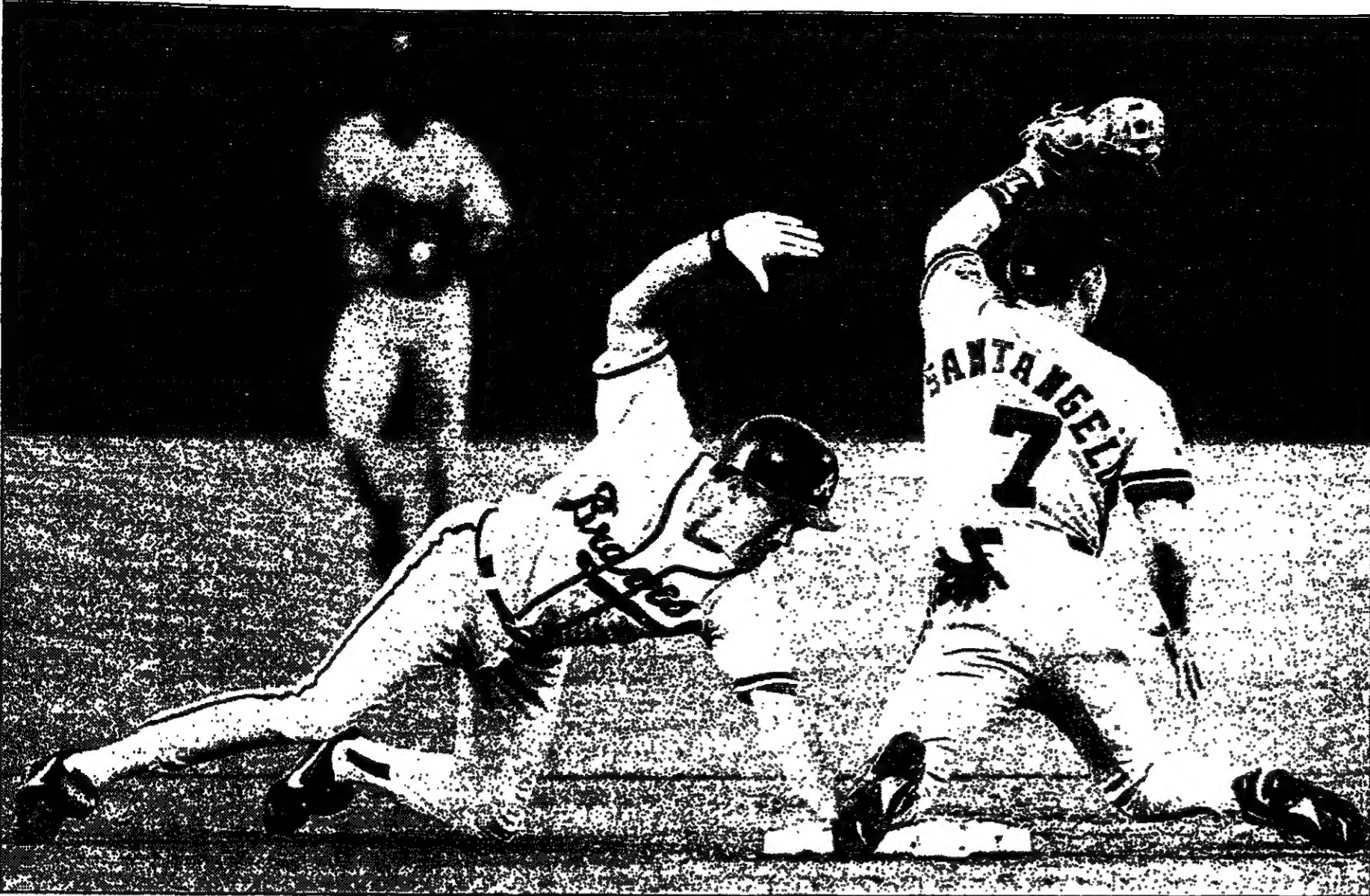
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SITUATIONS VACANT

Southern Coast

TEACHERS



Atlanta's Greg Maddux (left) tries to stay on second base after being tagged out by Montreal's F.P. Santangelo who shows the ball to the umpire after Maddux tried to stretch a single into a double in third inning action in Atlanta. Maddux argued unsuccessfully that he slid around the tag. (Reuters)

Twins beat Rangers 6-5, win fourth straight

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Todd Walker went 4-for-4 and hit a tiebreaking home run in the seventh inning as the Minnesota Twins won their fourth straight, 6-5 over the Texas Rangers on Wednesday.

Walker hit a solo homer with two outs in the seventh off Xavier Hernandez (1-1) for a 6-5 lead. He also tripled and drove in two runs in his second career four-hit game.

Minnesota matched its longest winning streak of the season. Texas lost its third in a row.

Mike Trombley (2-2) pitched two innings of one-hit relief for the victory, and Rick Aguilera worked the ninth for his ninth save.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Phillies 10, Cubs 5

In Chicago, Rico Brogna homered, doubled and tied a career-high with five RBIs as the Philadelphia Phillies beat the Chicago Cubs Wednesday.

Sammy Sosa hit two homers for the Cubs, who lost for the fifth time in six games. He had a solo shot in the eighth inning and a two-run drive, his 13th, in the ninth.

Brogna had three hits, including a two-run, homer that highlighted a six-run seventh inning. It was the second time Brogna has had five RBIs this season and the third time in his career.

Mets 8, Marlins 2

In Miami, Mike Piazza had four hits and Rey Ordonez's two-run double capped a six-run fifth inning as the New York Mets extended their

winning streak to six games. The Mets had 15 hits, giving them 56 in four games since acquiring Piazza from Florida.

Bernard Gilkey, who had 18 home runs last year, hit his first homer of the season in his 114th at-bat. The Mets rallied from a 2-0 deficit by scoring six times in the fifth after Brian Meadows (4-5) retired the first two batters.

Massaro Yoshii (4-1) pitched six innings and allowed two runs on back-to-back homers by Cliff Floyd and Ryan Jackson. Yoshii retired the final 11 batters he faced.

Braves 2, Expos 0

In Atlanta, Greg Maddux became Atlanta's fourth seven-game winner, and Ryan Klesko's sacrifice fly in the seventh inning snapped a scoreless duel.

The Braves, who set a franchise record for May victories with a 9-3 triumph over Montreal on Tuesday, improved to 21-5 this month. That's the most victories in any month since the team moved to Atlanta in 1966.

The Braves have won four straight, and eight of nine.

Maddux (7-2) allowed six hits in 8 1/3 innings, and Kerry Lichtenberg got Robert Perez to ground into a game-ending double play for his seventh save.

Maddux, whose ERA dropped to 1.84, joined teammates Tom Glavine, Kevin Millwood and Denny Neagle as seven-game winners.

Dodgers 3, Astros 1

In Houston, Darren Dreifort improved to 3-0 while pitching to former Olympic batterymate Charles Johnson.

Dreifort (3-4) has not lost since Johnson was traded to the Dodgers in a seven-player deal with Florida on May 15. They played together on the US baseball team at the 1992 Olympics.

Dreifort pitched six innings, allowing one run and four hits. Johnson did not fare so well at the plate, going hitless in four at-bats and leaving him in an 0-for-34 slump.

Cardinals 2, Rockies 1

In St. Louis, Todd Stottlemyre out-pitched Darryl Kile and the St. Louis Cardinals won despite ending their streak of 17 straight games with a home run.

It was a quiet night for Mark McGwire, who on Monday became the first player ever to hit 25 home runs before June 1. He went 0-for-3 with a walk.

Stottlemyre (6-4) blanked the Rockies on three singles until the ninth, when Todd Helton hit his sixth home run with one out.

Jeff Reed followed with a single, and Jeff Brantley relieved for his eighth save.

Kile (5-6) gave up only four hits in seven innings and struck out five.

Larry Walker's 20-game hitting streak, the longest in the majors this season, came to an end. Walker was 0-for-4 against Stottlemyre.

Brewers 3, Pirates 2, 10 innings

In Milwaukee, Mark Loreta's RBI single off Ricardo Rincon with one out in the 10th gave the Milwaukee Brewers a two-game sweep of the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Fernando Vina led off the 10th with a single to right and was sacrificed to second by Jeff Cirillo. Jeremy Burnitz drew a four-pitch walk from Rincon (0-2) before Loreta drove in Vina with a line drive to left field.

Brad Woodall (1-2), the fifth Brewers pitcher, pitched a perfect 10th and picked up his first victory since 1996, when he was with Atlanta.

The Brewers took a 2-1 lead into the ninth, but Doug Jones gave up his eighth homer and blew his sixth save when leadoff hitter Kevin Young hit a 1-1 pitch into the left-field seats. It was Young's eighth homer of the season and the first by Pittsburgh in six games.

Padres 6, Diamondbacks 4

In Phoenix, Steve Finley drove in three runs with a triple and a double, and Tony Gwynn had two RBIs as the San Diego Padres defeated the Arizona Diamondbacks.

Finley tied the game 3-3 with a two-run triple in the fifth, and Gwynn followed with a sacrifice fly to put the Padres ahead for good.

Donne Wall (2-1), who relieved starter Sterling Hitchcock in the fifth, pitched two scoreless innings for the win.

Trevor Hoffman got the final four outs for his 15th save of the season.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Atlanta	39	14	.734	—
New York	28	20	.583	8 1/2
Philadelphia	24	25	.490	13
Houston	18	33	.353	20
St. Louis	17	35	.327	21 1/2

Central Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Boston	32	20	.615	—
Chicago	28	23	.549	3 1/2
St. Louis	26	24	.520	5
Milwaukee	25	25	.500	6
Cincinnati	24	29	.452	8 1/2
Pittsburgh	24	29	.452	8 1/2

West Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
San Diego	33	20	.623	—
San Francisco	30	23	.566	3
Los Angeles	26	26	.500	6 1/2
Colorado	22	30	.423	10 1/2
Arizona	16	36	.308	16 1/2

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
NY Yankees	35	11	.761	—
Boston	29	20	.592	7 1/2
Toronto	27	24	.529	10 1/2
Tampa Bay	23	27	.460	14
Baltimore	23	28	.451	14 1/2

Central Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Cleveland	29	21	.580	—
Minnesota	23	27	.460	6
White Sox	20	29	.408	8 1/2
Detroit	19	31	.380	10
Chicago	19	31	.380	10

West Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Seattle	31	19	.620	—
Los Angeles	25	25	.500	6
San Diego	23	28	.451	8 1/2
Oakland	21	29	.420	10

SPORTS

in brief

Wright out of World Cup

LONDON (AP) — Veteran Arsenal striker Ian Wright was ruled out of the World Cup yesterday because of a hamstring injury he collected in Wednesday's warmup game against Morocco in Casablanca.

A scan at England's Spanish training camp in La Manga confirmed the 34-year-old Arsenal striker had damaged his left hamstring and would need at least two weeks to recover. He is set to fly back to England.

"I'm so disappointed, above all because I think England can go a very long way in this World Cup and I wanted so much to be part of that with the boys," Wright said.

"I can promise the boys that they won't have a bigger supporter in France or at home than me."

Zidane goal gives France victory

CASABLANCA (Reuters) — A 64th minute toe-poke from Zinedine Zidane was enough to give France a 1-0 win over old rivals Belgium in a spirited match in the King Hassan II tournament on Wednesday.

Zidane, attempting to put last week's defeat in the European Cup final with Juventus behind him, reacted just seconds before Belgian goalkeeper Filip de Wilde to a speculative through pass to send the ball bouncing into an unguarded net.

Like the earlier match in the same stadium in which England defeated hosts Morocco 1-0, this World Cup warm-up was played largely at three-quarters pace — although both sides went close to scoring several times.

Austria unimpressive in 2-1 win over Tunisia

VIENNA (Reuters) — Austria beat fellow World Cup qualifiers Tunisia 2-1 in a warm-up on Wednesday to restore their confidence after two previous defeats.

Although the Austrians played better than in the earlier friendlies which they lost 3-2 to Hungary and 3-0 to the United States, their performance was not stunning.

With the exception of a strong 20 minute spell at the start, when Harald Cerny and Arnold Weill scored in the 11th and 17th minutes, the Austrians were generally sluggish.

And a misunderstanding which ended in an unnecessary collision between goalkeeper Franz Wohlfahrt and midfielder Heimo Pfeifenberger, led to Tunisia's goal through a header by Khaled Badra in the 23rd minute.

Real Madrid fire coach Jupp Heynckes

MADRID (AP) — Real Madrid's coach Jupp Heynckes was fired yesterday, eight days after he led the team to its record seventh European Champions Cup and its first in 32 years.

The outgoing German coach was not available for comment, but club chairman Lorenzo Sanz confirmed the long-rumored sacking to reporters waiting outside the team's Santiago Bernabeu stadium.

"If we had not won the (final) of the European Champions Cup this would have been one of the worst seasons in recent years," Sanz said to explain the decision to fire Heynckes that he himself admitted "seems like a paradox."

Defending champions Real finished fourth in the domestic first division, an embarrassing 11 points behind this year's winners and traditional rivals FC Barcelona.

Newcastle: Shearer not for sale

NEWCASTLE (AP) — Newcastle told Juventus and Real Madrid yesterday that England captain Alan Shearer is not for sale.

"Let me stress once and for all that he is not leaving this club," Magpies chief executive Freddie Fletcher said in reply to media speculation that the England star will move abroad.

"We have not had a bid from Juventus but, in any case, if anyone is interested in him they are wasting their time."

"Alan Shearer is a key part of this club's future. His experience at club, European and International level is vital as we go through a period of re-structuring and we'd be mad to let him go," Fletcher said.

According to Fletcher, manager Kenny Dalglish sees Shearer as the key component in his plan to make Newcastle a major contender again. "Alan Shearer came to Newcastle as part of a long-term strategy," Fletcher said.

"We aim to make this club one of the biggest and best in Europe and to achieve that aim we need players of his caliber."

Policeman killed in Round Britain race

LONDON (Reuters) — A policeman directing traffic five minutes ahead of the fifth stage of the Round Britain cycling race was killed in a collision with a private car yesterday.

The 90-year-old was halted while the victim was taken to hospital and organisers later abandoned the stage from Birmingham to Cardiff.

Organisers said they were trying to establish details of the accident which occurred after 55 kms of the stage. They said the cyclist's prize money for the day would be donated to the policeman's family.

The nine-day race, which finishes in London on Sunday, is due to resume today with a stage from Bristol to Reading.

English soccer clubs to decide on pay-per-view TV

LONDON (Reuters) — England's leading clubs will discuss a plan to introduce pay-per-view television coverage of matches from next season at a meeting today, a premier league spokesman said yesterday.

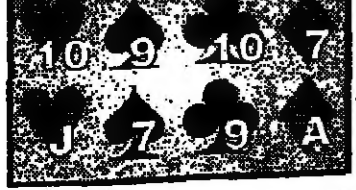
"What is before the club chairmen is a report from the working party on pay-per-view. It is entirely for the clubs to decide," spokesman Mike Lee said.

A four-person working party headed by premier league chief executive Peter Leaver was set up in March to consider the implications of introducing pay-per-view.

Chairmen of the 20 premier league clubs are currently holding their summer meeting in central England. Lee said the chairmen always sought what he called a "broad consensus" on key commercial deals.

WINNING CARDS

in yesterday's Mifal Hapayis daily chance drawing



ARU boss threatens snub of northern hemisphere

SYDNEY (Reuters) — Australian rugby's most powerful administrator has warned British teams that they risk being snubbed by Australia if they persist in picking weakened squads to tour Down Under.

Australian Rugby Union (ARU) general manager John O'Neill said Australia would be better served by inviting developing rugby nations rather than tolerating second-choice squads from the Home Unions.

"If the Home Unions, some or all of them, don't want to play international rugby at a high level, and that means having their finest players available, then we have to look elsewhere," O'Neill told The Australian newspaper.

"It's not as if international rugby can't get on without them." The ARU is furious that England and Scotland have sent under-strength teams on their current tours of Australia despite international regulations requiring countries to select their best players.

The Scots, who were humiliated 51-26 by Fiji on Tuesday, are missing eight regular players while the English are missing 14 and have 20 uncapped players in the squad.

The ARU is facing a major financial shortfall because of the public's lack of interest in the two touring teams with ticket sales for the three Tests slowing to a trickle.

ARU officials say the blame lies

Essex reach Benson and Hedges semis

LONDON (Reuters) — Essex and defending champions Surrey made it to the semifinals of the Benson and Hedges Cup yesterday, winning matches carried over from Wednesday because of rain.

England one-day skipper Adam Hoolioake steered Surrey to a comfortable five-wicket victory over Lancashire at the Oval to set up a repeat of last year's semi-final with Leicestershire.

Meanwhile Essex, who defeated Middlesex by eight runs at Lords, face Yorkshire in the other semi-final.

Both matches are to be played on June 9.

Chasing 204 to win, Surrey resumed on 35-0 from eight overs.

Ally Brown and Alec Stewart extended their opening stand to 78 before a Lancashire fightback reduced them to 110-4.

That brought Hoolioake in to join Mark Butcher and the pair put on 70 for the fifth wicket.

After Butcher was judged caught behind, Hoolioake, who finished unbeaten on 39 including two huge sixes, was joined by younger brother Ben (14 not out) to see Surrey home with 4.2 overs to spare.

In the semi-final at the Oval last year Surrey beat Leicestershire by 130 runs and went on to win the trophy, beating Kent by eight wickets.

In the other semi-final, Yorkshire will play Essex, who beat Middlesex by eight runs despite Angus Fraser's six off the last ball. Fraser's Middlesex could only reach 224-7 in reply to Essex's 232-9 on Wednesday.

Essex paceman Ashley Cowan finished with 5-28, running

through the top half of the Middlesex order.

He took three early wickets to leave Middlesex in trouble at 51 for three before a century partnership between Australian opener Justin Langer (71) and Owais Shah (43) put the home side on top.

Then Cowan returned to remove the pair of them with the first and fourth balls of his comeback over.

That destroyed the momentum of the home side's innings and despite 24 from Paul Weekes they fell agonizingly short of their target.

"I personally would prefer to play week in, week out. If I can play each week then I am happy to do that," said McGrath, who has not played for Australia since January because of complications with a groin strain and an old hernia injury.

Gillespie, who has not played since being sent home from the 1997 Ashes series because of a stress fracture in his lower back, was also sceptical.

"I think at the end of the day you're going to be told that you have to rest instead of being given the option," he said.

McGrath and Gillespie both missed Australia's recent tour to India and Sharjah but are confident they will be back before England tours Australia at the end of the year.

McGrath said he hoped to play for the Rest of the World against the MCC in the Princess Diana memorial match at Lords in July. Gillespie said he was hoping to be back in time for the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur in September.

The plan to roster the paceman is similar to the strategy used by American baseball teams where pitchers are constantly rotated regardless of their status in the game.

Even in the World Series, it is common for a team's top starting pitcher to pitch in the first game then miss the next two so he can be at peak fitness for the fourth game.

Both McGrath and Gillespie, Australia's premier strike bowlers, said they had reservations about the plan.

